CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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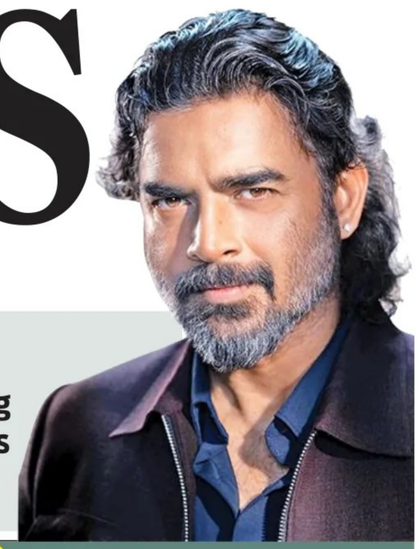

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'IRAN LOSING BIG, US CLEARING HORMUZ'

Trump, who referred to Iran as a "failing nation", stated that the US is prepared to "reset" if the negotiations do not proceed as planned

ISLAMABAD

Peace talks between Iran and the US held in Islamabad on Saturday, with senior negotiators from both countries meeting face to face at the highest level for the first time since 1979, in the presence of mediators from Pakistan.

JD Vance, the US vice-president, led the American delegation, while Iran's negotiators in Islamabad were headed up by Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the parliamentary speaker, and foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi.

The first round of discussions went on for around two hours, a political source said, and was followed by a second round of more technical discussions. These technical talks were divided into key topics, with a focus on security, finance and the strait of Hormuz, the source added.

It was then planned that there would be a break for dinner, to be hosted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at his residence.

Earlier the Iranian negotiators demanded a ceasefire in Lebanon, reparations and commitment to unblock frozen assets as part of a peace deal in a preliminary meeting with Pakistani mediators, led Sharif.

However, the US warned it would not allow itself to be manipulated by a weakened Tehran. On his arrival, Vance said: "If they're going to try to play us, then they're going to find the negotiating team is not that receptive." In previous negotiations, the US and Iranian teams have been based separately. During the nuclear negotiations held in Geneva in late February, diplomats from Oman shuttled between the two sides, though the talks collapsed when the US and Israel bombed Iran on 28 February, killing supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

'All of Iran's minelaying ships have been sunk'

US President Trump on Saturday said the US military has started to clear the Strait of Hormuz and that all of Iran's minelaying ships have been sunk. "We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump wrote in a social media post. "The US is doing this as a "favour" to countries including China, Japan, South Korea, France, Germany and others because they do not have the "will" or the "courage" to do it themselves. The Strait will open in the "not too distant future."

'Pak emerging as peacemaker won't erase its past misdeeds'

NEW DELHI

Amid ongoing peace talks between the US and Iran in Islamabad, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Saturday emphasised that if Pakistan emerges as a peacemaker in a specific context, it does not erase the evidence of its past misdeeds.

"Who beings bout the peace won't matter if peace comes," said Tharoor.

He also said that he does not see India in competition with Pakistan regarding this issue.

Speaking with reporters after attending the National History Conference here, Tharoor said Pakistan has "skin in the game" as it shares a 900 km-long border with Iran and also has a significant Shia population.

The Congress leader noted

that if the conflict escalates, all the refugees will come to Pakistan, and therefore, its stake is different in this game from that of India.

Tharoor underscored that India has a fundamental interest in both peace and maintaining regional stability.

"A vacuum is dangerous; it hurts us in other ways also. As a leading voice of the Global South, India is a responsible stakeholder in the process of constructing a viable regional and global order and for that we cannot afford to be passive, we cannot just observe when fires are blazing in the neighbourhood, we would have to play an active role but it would have to be carefully considered role, one where we examine for ourselves what is the most useful contribution we can make," Tharoor said.

"Sometimes, that useful contribution may truly be in silence. I have written that earlier. But today we are understandably more active in the region, three ministers are flying around, and the prime minister is on the phone. All of this is very good. We need to see much more of this because that engagement is what keeps us viable and potentially able to play a larger role that today we are not in a position to play," Tharoor said.

US warships cross Strait in first such transit since Iran war began

TEHRAN

Two US warships have reportedly passed through the Strait of Hormuz, the first such transit since the war with Iran began, as President Donald Trump said Saturday that the United States had started "clearing out" the strategic waterway.

The US Navy guided-missile destroyers passed through the strait with no issues reported. The operation was not coordinated with authorities in Tehran, as per reports.

"We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said on his Truth Social platform, calling it

"a favor" to countries such as China, Japan and France that "don't have the Courage or Will to do this work themselves."

He insisted that Iran is "LOSING BIG!" in the conflict, while acknowledging that Iranian mines in the strategic strait -- through which a fifth of the world's crude passes -- still pose a threat.

TANKERS EXIT GULF VIA HORMUZ AMID US-IRAN TALKS

Tehran: Three supertankers passed through the Hormuz, marking what appeared to be the first vessels to exit the Gulf when the US-Iran ceasefire deal and peace talks were under way in Pakistan.

First India-flagged LPG tanker crosses Hormuz after US-Iran truce

Jag Vikram, an India-flagged LPG tanker has succesfully crossed the Strait of Hormuz. This marks the first transit by an Indian vessel since a temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran was announced. The vessel movement was also confirmed by a government statement giving an update on developments in West Asia. "The India-flagged LPG vessel Jag Vikram has safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz today (Saturday)," it said. "The vessel is carrying approximately 20,400 tonnes of LPG cargo with 24 seafarers onboard. It is expected to arrive at Mumbai on April 15, 2026."

Tankers line up for' sweetest' American oil: Trump

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Saturday hailed the sight of "massive numbers of completely empty oil tankers" heading toward the US to collect American crude. Describing the exports as the "best and 'sweetest' oil (and gas!) anywhere in the world," the President's remarks come as global markets pivot away from GCC countries due to severe disruptions caused by the escalating war in West Asia. The shift in global energy logistics follows Iran's effective closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz. In retaliation for US-Israeli strikes on its own facilities, Tehran has targeted critical oil infrastructure across the region, including refineries and ports.

IRANIANS ONLY ALIVE TO NEGOTIATE: TRUMP ON TALKS IN PAK

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Saturday said Iran has "no cards" in upcoming talks with the United States, apart from Tehran's effective stranglehold on the crucial Strait of Hormuz shipping channel. "The Iranians don't seem to realize they have no cards, other than a short term extortion of the World by using International Waterways. The only reason they are alive today is to negotiate!" Trump said on his Truth Social network. US Vice President JD Vance on Friday left for Pakistan to participate in peace talks with Iran to end their war.

> The Iranians don't seem to realize they have no cards, other than a short term extortion of the World by using International Waterways
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

Asha Bhosle hospitalised after mild heart attack

MUMBAI

Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle was on Saturday admitted to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital after reportedly suffering a mild heart attack. She is undergoing treatment in the Emergency Medical Services unit of the Breach Candy, according to Dr Pratit Samdani.

Sources indicated that the 92-year-old singer's condition is stable and being closely monitored by a team of doctors. The development has sparked concern among fans and members of the film and music fraternity, many of whom have expressed their wishes for her speedy recovery.

Bhosle, known for songs such as Piya Tu Ab To Aaja, Jaiye Aap Kahan Jayenge, Rangeela Re, and Sharara Sharara, will turn 93 on September 8, 2026.

5-yr-old raped, stuffed in sack and dumped; accused held

DURG

A five-year-old girl was kidnapped and raped allegedly by a man who later put her in a sack and dumped her near a well in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, a police official said on Saturday.

The incident took place under Utai police station limits on Friday afternoon when the victim, after returning home from school, went to a nearby shop to buy chocolates, the official said.

Accused Dhaneshwar Sahu (35), who was present at the shop, lured the child to his house on the pretext of giving her chocolates, he said.

"When the girl did not return home for a long time, her family members and local villagers launched a search. After a two-hour-long effort, two youths from the village spotted movement inside a sack near a well. Upon opening the sack, the minor was found inside with her mouth gagged with a pillow cover. She was in a state of shock," he said.

The girl's medical examination confirmed rape, following which the accused was arrested, Patan area Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Anoop Lakra said. Her condition is now stable, he added.

A team from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) has collected evidence from the spot, Lakra informed.

The incident sparked a massive outcry as angry villagers surrounded the local police station demanding capital punishment for the accused.

Nizar Amedi elected Iran's new president

BAGHDAD

The Iraqi parliament on Saturday elected Kurdish politician Nizar Amedi as the country's new president, a largely ceremonial role, following a parliamentary election last November.

Amedi (58), is a former environment minister and has headed the political office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Baghdad since 2024.

Iraq is now due to choose a prime minister, a closely-watched and sensitive pick.

US President Donald Trump threatened in January to withdraw Washington's support for Iraq, a major oil producer, if former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was designated to form a cabinet.

Don't fall prey to efforts of evil people who promote hatred: CM

KALABURAGI

In a society with many castes, religions, languages and cultures, we should achieve unity in diversity, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He was speaking after inaugurating the new silver chariot festival and inaugurating the Kalyana Mantapa after dedicating the new Sri Sri Sri Bhojalingeshwara temple in Chittapur taluk on Saturday.

"Bhojalingeshwara showed the path of truth to the society and spread equality and unity. We are all human beings and we have to live as human beings. No religion teaches hatred. There are those among us

who sow hatred for each other. There are vested interests who are working to divide the society in the name of religion and power and pit one against another, and we should not fall prey to their lure. That is what Bojalingeshwara Swamiji said," he said.

He said that "The goal should be in front, the guru behind" should be what sadhus, saints, social reformers, and Basavanna said.

QUICK READ

State sets ball rolling for new stadium in Anekal

BENGALURU: The state has taken the first step to construct an international cricket stadium in Anekal, on the outskirts of Bengaluru, with the Karnataka Housing Board (KHB) floating tenders for the first phase of this ambitious project. The first phase --worth Rs 950 crore -- will focus on the construction of the stadium, connecting roadways and allied activities. The project to construct a new stadium at Suryanagar of Indlawadi in Anekal taluk was approved by the state Cabinet in October 2025 after 11 RCB fans lost their lives in a stampede outside Chinnaswamy Stadium during the IPL victory celebrations in June 2025.

Leopard dies after fight with porcupine

CHAMARAJANAGAR

A leopard died after a fight with a porcupine near Bommanahalli in Gundlupet taluk.The leopard had quills stuck in its leg and mouth. Forest officials are investigating the incident, and a post-mortem was conducted to determine the cause of death.

ONG-CHERISHED DREAM

Ladakh secures distinct Aadhaar identity, J&K tag dropped

LEH

Nearly seven years after being carved out as a separate Union territory from the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, Ladakh has finally secured a distinct identity in Aadhaar records, with the 'Jammu and Kashmir' label now replaced with 'Ladakh'.

The development, addressing a long-pending public demand, was carried out following the intervention of newly-appointed Ladakh Lt Governor VK Saxena, a spokesperson of the Lok Bhavan said.

Despite the formation of the Union Territory of Ladakh in 2019, Aadhaar records of people of Ladakh continued to bear the name of the earlier state of Jammu and Kashmir in the 'State' field -- causing widespread hassles and drawing grievances from various quarters.

Taking serious note of the prolonged pendency in this matter, the L-G directed the Union territory administration to resolve the issue at the earliest, the spokesperson said.

Subsequently, the administration took up the matter with

the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The long-awaited correction has now been successfully implemented, ensuring that Ladakh's distinct regional identity is accurately represented in Aadhaar, he added.

The continued reflection of 'Jammu and Kashmir' in Aadhaar records of Ladakh residents had been causing considerable inconvenience to people.

The issue not only created hardship for citizens but also affected proper representation of the Union territory in Aadhaar-linked records and progress reports.

The L-G said the development would greatly benefit the residents of Ladakh by removing procedural hurdles and enabling seamless access to services. "Ensuring that the identity of Ladakh is accurately reflected in official records is not only an administrative necessity, but also a matter of the identity and convenience for our people. The successful resolution of this long-pending issue, reflects the Union territory administration's commitment to responsive governance, ease of living, and ensuring that the unique identity of Ladakh is properly represented across all official platforms," Saxena said.

To resolve the issue, the administration, in coordination with UIDAI, devised an innovative mechanism to update the 'State' field centrally.

QUICK READ

Residents voice concerns over neglect in Kempagowda ward

CH NEWS, Bengaluru Residents of the Boro Raja Kempagowda Ward in Bengaluru's Yelahanka Assembly constituency have expressed dissatisfaction over alleged neglect of civic issues, claiming that their concerns remain unaddressed despite administrative changes. The Boro Raja Kempagowda Ward, located in the Bengaluru North Zone under the Yelahanka Assembly constituency, has recently undergone administrative changes following the delimitation of wards under the Greater Bengaluru Authority. As per the new arrangement, the ward has been reserved for a general female candidate, marking a shift in its political representation. However, residents say that these changes have not translated into improvements on the ground. Many locals have voiced frustration over unresolved civic problems, stating that authorities have failed to respond to their grievances.

Food safety officials raid highway dhabas near Bengaluru

CH News, Bengaluru Food safety authorities conducted surprise inspections at several roadside eateries along Tumakuru Road in Nelamangala, uncovering alleged use of unsafe and adulterated ingredients. Notices were issued and fines imposed during the operation. In a major crackdown on food safety violations, officials carried out raids on multiple dhabas located along the Tumakuru Road highway in Nelamangala town on Wednesday. The inspections were prompted by allegations that some eateries were preparing food using unsafe and adulterated ingredients, posing potential health risks to customers. During the operation, several popular dhabas, including Reddy Dhaba, Chandu Dhaba, and Miracle Dhaba, were inspected. Authorities examined kitchen conditions, food storage practices, and hygiene standards. In some establishments, food samples were collected for further laboratory testing to determine the presence of harmful substances or contamination.

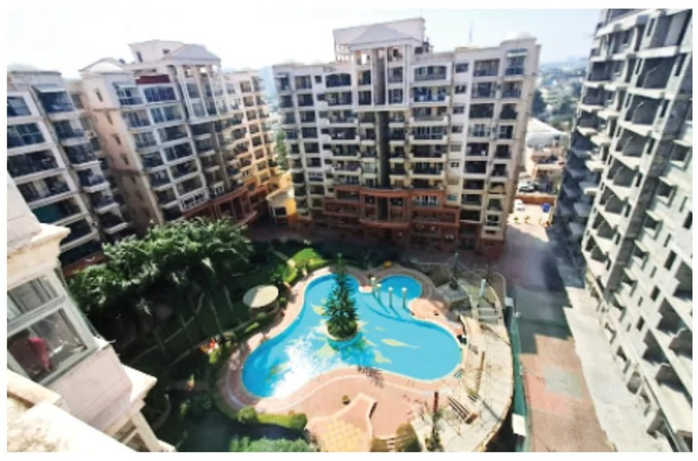
Ambedkar Development Corp announces recruitment for key posts

CH News, Bengaluru The Dr. BR Ambedkar Development Corporation in Bengaluru has announced recruitment for the posts of Legal Advisor and Company Secretary, offering a valuable opportunity for candidates seeking careers in the Government of Karnataka. The Dr. BR Ambedkar Development Corporation Limited, a prominent institution under the Government of Karnataka, has issued an official notification inviting applications for key positions in Bengaluru. The recruitment drive aims to fill two important posts Legal Advisor and Company Secretary, providing an excellent opportunity for qualified candidates to secure government employment. According to the notification, interested candidates can apply offline for these positions, with the deadline set for April 21.

BSCC asks citizens to self-enumerate for Census 2027

'The self-enumeration window is nearing its closure, making it crucial for citizens to complete the process promptly'

CH NEWS, BENGALURU



In a significant step toward ensuring comprehensive data collection for the Census 2026–27, the Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) has intensified its outreach efforts.

Commissioner K N Ramesh will visit HM Tambourine Apartment located in Jaraganahalli along Kanakapura Main Road on Saturday at 11:30 AM.

The visit aims to motivate residents to take advantage of the self-enumeration facility, which allows individuals to submit their census data independently.

Officials stated that the self-enumeration window is nearing its closure, making it crucial for citizens to complete the process promptly. During the visit, the Commissioner will interact with residents and emphasize the importance of accurate and timely participation in the census. The initiative is expected to witness collective participation, with a large number of apartment residents joining the process simultaneously.

The civic body believes that active public involvement will not only streamline the enumeration process but also ensure better planning and allocation of resources in the future. Reliable census data plays a key role in shaping policies related to infrastructure, healthcare, education, and urban development.

Following the event, Commissioner Ramesh will address members of the media at approximately 12:15 PM, highlighting the progress of the self-enumeration drive and urging wider participation across the city.

Harish, Assistant Public Relations Officer of the Bengaluru South City Municipal Corporation, has been designated as the contact person for further information regarding the initiative. Authorities have reiterated that citizen cooperation is essential for the success of the national census exercise.

DRDPR releases revised wage, benefit details of GP employees

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The salaries of Gram Panchayat employees are determined in line with periodic revisions by the Labour Department

The Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (DRDPR) in Karnataka has officially released revised details of minimum wages, allowances, and welfare benefits for Gram Panchayat employees.

According to the latest notification, the salaries of Gram Panchayat employees are determined in line with periodic revisions by the Labour Department. The updated structure includes both minimum wages and dearness allowance components for various positions.

Cleaners will receive a total monthly salary of ₹18,243.12, which includes a minimum wage of ₹16,019.52 and a dearness allowance of ₹2,223.60. Bill collectors, clerks, and data entry operators are entitled to ₹17,420.32, while water operators will earn ₹15,732.92 per month. Attendants will receive a total salary of ₹15,097.12.

In addition to wages, the department has detailed several employee benefits. Staff members are eligible for 10 days of casual leave and two days of restricted leave annually. Women employees are entitled to 180 days of maternity leave, while male employees can avail 15 days of paternity leave.

The government has also introduced provisions for gratuity, ensuring financial security after retirement or in the event of death during service. Employees will receive gratuity calculated at 15 days' wages for each year of service, subject to a maximum limit of 20 months' salary.

Further, financial assistance of ₹10,000 will be provided from Panchayat funds to support funeral expenses if an employee passes away while in service. Compassionate appointments are also предусмотрed for eligible dependents of deceased employees.

Insurance coverage has been made mandatory under national schemes, along with group personal accident policies linked to salary accounts. Employees suffering from serious illnesses such as cancer, heart surgery, or kidney-related conditions can claim up to ₹50,000 for medical expenses.

Additionally, a compensation of ₹30 lakh has been announced for employees who lose their lives while performing COVID-19 duties, along with coverage of treatment expenses. The move is expected to strengthen welfare measures and ensure better job security for Panchayat staff across the state.

Sports event planned for civic workers to mark Ambedkar Jayanti

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Central City Corporation organized a special sports event for civic workers, gangmen, and gardeners on the occasion of Dr. BR Ambedkar Jayanti. The event was inaugurated by Commissioner Rajendra Cholan at a prominent sports ground in Jayanagar.

Marking the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation conducted a sports meet on April 11, 2026, to honor the contributions of civic workers and promote their well-being. The event took place at the Kittur Rani Chennamma Stadium in Jayanagar and witnessed enthusiastic participation from sanitation workers, gangmen, and gardening staff employed by the civic body.

Commissioner Rajendra Cholan formally inaugurated the event and addressed the gathering, highlighting the invaluable role played by civic workers in maintaining the cleanliness and functionality of the city. He emphasized that such initiatives are aimed at recognizing their efforts and encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle among the workforce.

The sports meet featured a range of activities designed to foster teamwork, physical fitness, and morale among participants. Employees from various wards came together to compete and showcase their talents in a spirit of unity and sportsmanship. The event also served as a platform for interaction and appreciation, strengthening the bond between the civic administration and its workforce.

Gas leak triggers fire at eatery in Chickpet

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A fire accident caused by a gas leak has been reported in Bengaluru, raising concerns amid an ongoing shortage of gas cylinders in the city.

The incident occurred at a dosa hotel in the busy Chickpet area, resulting in property damage but no loss of life.

According to initial reports, the fire broke out at a local dosa hotel in Chickpet, a densely populated commercial locality in Bengaluru.

The blaze is suspected to have been triggered by a gas leak, which quickly escalated into a major fire, engulfing parts of the establishment.

The incident comes at a time when the city is already facing a shortage of cooking gas cylinders, adding to safety concerns regarding the handling and storage of gas equipment. Eyewitnesses reported seeing flames and smoke rising from the hotel, prompting immediate alert to emergency services.

Fire personnel rushed to the spot and managed to bring the situation under control before it could spread to nearby shops and buildings. Several items inside the dosa hotel, including kitchen equipment and furniture, were destroyed in the fire. However, no casualties or injuries were reported, providing a sense of relief to local residents and business owners in the vicinity. Authorities have registered a case at the City Market Police Station and initiated an investigation into the exact cause of the gas leak and subsequent fire. Officials are also expected to review safety compliance measures followed by eateries in the area to prevent such incidents in the future.

The incident highlights the importance of proper maintenance and regular inspection of gas cylinders and pipelines, especially in commercial kitchens where the risk of accidents remains high.

Family members 'assault' elderly woman

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A disturbing case of alleged domestic violence has emerged in Bengaluru, where an elderly woman was reportedly abused and assaulted by her own son and grandsons.

The incident has sparked concern over rising cases of elder abuse within families.

According to reports, the victim, identified as Gowramma, was allegedly subjected to physical and verbal abuse by her son Nagesh and grandsons Chetan and Akash. The incident reportedly took place in Bengaluru, leaving the elderly woman severely distressed and injured.

It is alleged that the accused assaulted Gowramma using sharp weapons, including machetes, causing serious harm. The shocking nature of the incident has drawn attention to the vulnerability of elderly individuals, particularly within their own households. Reports also suggest that the accused made insensitive remarks, indicating a lack of empathy and care toward the elderly woman.

Further allegations indicate that the grandsons, Chetan and Akash, are associated with local troublemakers and have been attempting to create fear in the neighborhood. Along with their father, they are accused of repeatedly mistreating their grandmother. It has also been claimed that the abuse stemmed from disputes over her care and responsibilities within the family.

The matter came to light after a distant relative and lawyer, Keshav, lodged a formal complaint at the Govindpur Police Station. Following the complaint, police have initiated an investigation into the incident and are working to verify the allegations and gather evidence.

Authorities have assured that strict action will be taken against those found guilty. The case highlights the urgent need for stronger safeguards and awareness regarding the protection of senior citizens, as incidents of abuse within families continue to surface.

TP staff attacked in Doddaballapur

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A shocking assault on a town panchayat employee has been reported in Bengaluru's Doddaballapur area, where the victim was allegedly attacked with a knife inside a cutting shop.

The incident, which occurred in Maruthi Nagar, has raised serious concerns about public safety and law enforcement in the region.

According to reports, the victim has been identified as Fardeen Baig, an employee of the Bashettihalli Town Panchayat. The attack reportedly took place when Baig visited a salon in Maruthi Nagar for a routine haircut. What began as a normal visit quickly turned into a violent incident when he was allegedly assaulted with a knife.

The assault is said to have been captured on CCTV cameras installed at the shop, providing crucial evidence for the investigation. The footage reportedly shows the involvement of town panchayat employee Umashankar, BJP worker Anand, and several accomplices.

Authorities are now reviewing the CCTV recordings to establish the sequence of events and identify all individuals involved in the attack.

Fardeen Baig sustained serious injuries during the assault, particularly to his abdominal and chest regions. He was immediately rushed for medical treatment, and his condition is said to be critical but stable.

The brutal nature of the attack has sparked outrage among local residents, who are demanding strict action against the accused.

Police officials have confirmed that a formal complaint has been registered at the Doddaballapur Town Police Station. An investigation is currently underway, and efforts are being made to apprehend all those involved in the crime. Authorities have assured that appropriate legal action will be taken based on the findings of the investigation. The incident has once again highlighted concerns over rising violence in public places and the need for stricter surveillance and policing. Local residents and civic groups have urged the administration to ensure swift justice and enhance security measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

MONSOON PREPAREDNESS

BWCC chief orders urgent drain desilting ahead of monsoon

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC) has intensified its pre-monsoon preparedness efforts, with Commissioner Dr. Rajendra KV conducting a comprehensive field inspection and issuing strict directions to officials on storm water drain maintenance, encroachment removal, and infrastructure readiness.

On April 11, Commissioner Dr. Rajendra K.V. inspected multiple areas under the Bengaluru West City Corporation limits to assess ongoing development works and readiness for the upcoming monsoon season. The inspection covered key localities including Kengeri, Mysuru Road, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Hosakerehalli, Nayandahalli Junction, Gali Anjaneya Temple area, Vijayanagar, and Govindarajanagar.

During the visit, the Commissioner placed strong emphasis on the cleaning and maintenance of storm water drains to prevent flooding and waterlogging. Officials were directed to immediately remove encroachments along drains on the Kengeri–Mysuru Road stretch to ensure the free flow of rainwater. He also instructed marshals and health officials to identify and act against unauthorized shops operating without valid trade licenses, including imposing penalties and initiating closure. At Rajarajeshwari Nagar, urgent cleaning of storm water drains was ordered, along with improvements to the drainage network. The Commissioner stressed that tree branches, debris, and waste must not be allowed to clog drains, and directed authorities to issue notices to illegal constructions obstructing drainage systems.

The inspection also included a review of infrastructure such as the skywalk near Kengeri Bus Stand, where officials were asked to carry out necessary modifications. Road works near Hosakerehalli Lake were examined, with instructions to implement corrective measures where required.

In sensitive areas like Nayandahalli Junction and near Gali Anjaneya Temple, officials were told to take preventive steps to ensure smooth water flow during heavy rains. Engineers across all divisions were instructed to identify potential waterlogging points in advance and address them proactively.

Additionally, the Commissioner reviewed the condition of a public park near Vijayanagar Metro Station and interacted with local residents to understand civic concerns. Senior engineering officials, including Chief Engineer Swayamprabha and other department heads, accompanied the inspection.

The civic body aims to minimize monsoon-related disruptions through timely action and strict enforcement measures across the city.

QUICK READ

Gold theft case leads to woman arrest

Sullia

Sullia police have arrested a woman and her associate for allegedly stealing gold ornaments worth around ₹5 lakh from a house in Sullia Kasaba limits. The accused, identified as Shruti alias Vishmeeta (37), was reportedly known to the victim's family and had borrowed about ₹6 lakh from the complainant's father. When asked to return the money, she visited the house. Later, gold ornaments weighing about 62.5 grams went missing after she left. Based on suspicion, a complaint was filed by Punyashree (20), leading to a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. During investigation, police also arrested Pradeep, who allegedly assisted in the theft, and recovered the stolen ornaments following interrogation. Further investigation is underway into the incident and related financial dealings going forward.

Tragedy strikes mehendi event as MC dies

Bantwal

In a tragic incident, a young emcee collapsed and died while hosting a mehendi function in Bantwal taluk. The deceased has been identified as Ashwith (32), a resident of Abbetu in Farangipete, who was known locally as a talented anchor. According to sources, the incident occurred at a relative's house in Nayila village, where a mehendi (madrangi) ceremony was being held. Ashwith had been assigned the role of compere for the event and had begun hosting the event with enthusiasm. However, within minutes of starting his presentation, he reportedly felt unwell and suddenly collapsed on the stage. He was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital, but doctors declared him dead despite efforts to revive him. The sudden death left those attending the celebrations in shock, casting a pall of gloom over the celebrations.

Elephant movement along Kumaradhara sparks anxiety in villages

Kadaba

Fresh sightings of wild elephants along the banks of the Kumaradhara River have left residents of Kadaba taluk on edge, amid fears of crop loss and safety concerns. According to local reports, the herd was seen roaming near riverbank areas, occasionally straying close to farmlands. The movement of elephants in the region, which lies along forest fringes, has become a recurring concern for villagers who depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Residents have appealed to the Forest Department to intensify surveillance and take preventive steps to avoid any untoward incidents. The latest sighting adds to ongoing concerns over human-elephant conflict in parts of Dakshina Kannada district, particularly in Kadaba taluk. Officials are expected to monitor the herd's movement and initiate measures to ensure both public safety and wildlife protection.

Kabaddi triumph for Alva's College women team

Alva's College won Mangalore University inter-collegiate women's kabaddi tournament, securing championship title with dominant performance.

MANGALURU

Alva's College emerged as champions in the Mangalore University inter-collegiate women's kabaddi tournament, securing the championship trophy with a dominant performance in the final match.

The tournament brought together multiple colleges affiliated with Mangalore University and featured competitive fixtures across several rounds. Alva's College maintained strong form throughout the competition, ultimately delivering an emphatic victory in the final to clinch the title.

The final match was described as one-sided, with Alva's College displaying superior coordination, tactical strength, and consistent performance in both raiding and defence. Their dominance ensured a comfortable win and secured them the championship trophy.

Organisers said the tournament aimed to encourage and promote women's participation in kabaddi, a sport that continues to gain popularity at the collegiate level in Karnataka. The event also served as a platform for student-athletes to showcase their skills and gain exposure to higher levels of competition.

Individual awards were also presented to standout performers across participating teams, recognising excellence in categories such as best raider, best defender, and best all-rounder. These accolades highlighted emerging talent from various colleges.

The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation and strong support from students and sports enthusiasts, reflecting the growing interest in kabaddi among women athletes in the region. Officials noted that such events play an important role in developing competitive sports culture in universities.

The victory further strengthens Alva's College's reputation in inter-collegiate sports, particularly in kabaddi, where it has consistently performed well in previous editions of university-level competitions.

Organisers added that the annual sports calendar under Mangalore University continues to provide valuable opportunities for student development and competitive excellence.

SJEC concludes Milan 2026 cultural fest

MANGALURU

SJEC's Milan 2026 cultural fest concluded in Mangaluru with vibrant dance, music, and student performances showcasing creativity, talent, and cultural diversity.

St Joseph Engineering College concluded its two-day cultural extravaganza "Milan 2026" with a vibrant evening programme showcasing dance, music, and student talent in Mangaluru.

The grand finale began with a procession that set a festive tone for the performances that followed. The stage featured a series of cultural acts, including solo classical and thematic dances, along with a Mohiniattam performance that highlighted traditional Indian art forms.

Musical performances by student groups added energy to the event, with both group singing and duet performances receiving enthusiastic response from the audience. The evening also included fusion performances that blended contemporary and traditional styles.

College principal Dr Rio D'Souza reflected on the institution's 25-year journey, emphasising the role of cultural activities in nurturing creativity, confidence, and human values among students.

Chief guest and media personality Walter Nandalike delivered an inspiring address, encouraging students to focus on personal growth and perseverance rather than comparison with others. He quoted entrepreneur Jack Ma to stress resilience in facing challenges.

Another guest, film producer Ln Kishore D Shetty, praised the college for providing a platform that fosters holistic student development through cultural engagement.

The programme concluded with high-energy performances including fusion dance acts and a DJ session, drawing strong participation from students. Prize distribution for events held during the fest was also conducted.

Organisers said the event reinforced the college's commitment to holistic education, offering students a platform to showcase talent while celebrating cultural diversity and creativity.

Shivamogga student loses ₹2 lakh in WFH scam

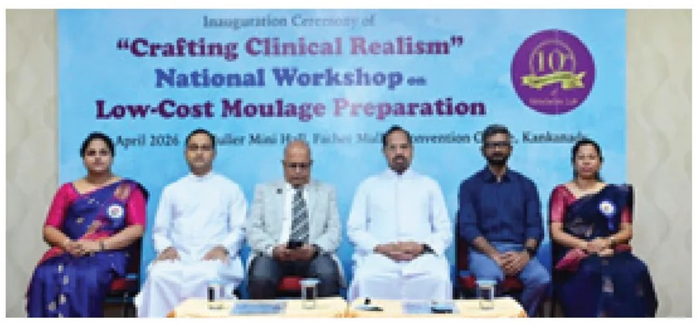
SHIVAMOGGA

A student from Shivamogga lost nearly ₹2 lakh after falling victim to a "work from home" online job scam, police said. She found the job advertisement on social media and was redirected to fraudsters posing as recruiters. They assigned simple tasks like posting reviews and initially paid small amounts to gain her trust. Later, she was persuaded to invest more money with promises of higher commissions and quick withdrawals. Over time, she transferred around ₹2 lakh before realising she had been cheated. Police said such scams often begin with small payouts and later demand larger sums under various pretexts. A case has been registered at the local cybercrime police station, and investigation is underway. Authorities have warned job seekers to avoid offers promising easy money, stressing that genuine companies never ask for advance payments.

Father Muller Nursing College hosted a national workshop on low-cost clinical simulation techniques to enhance healthcare training.

Father Muller hosts national simulation workshop

MANGALURU



Father Muller Nursing College in Mangaluru, in association with its Simulation and Skill Centre, organised a national workshop on low-cost clinical simulation techniques aimed at improving hands-on healthcare training.

The one-day programme, titled "Crafting Clinical Realism," focused on moulage preparation and was held at Muller Mini Hall, Kankanady. The event marked the 10th anniversary of the institution's Simulation Lab and is described as the second independent moulage workshop of its kind in India.

The workshop was inaugurated under the leadership of Rev. Fr Faustine Lucas Lobo, Director of Father Muller Charitable Institutions, with participation from senior faculty members and healthcare experts. Organisers said the initiative aims to strengthen simulation-based learning in medical education.

Experts including Dr Dinkar Pai, Mr Hemanth from AIIMS Rishikesh, and Dr Lulu Sherif Mahmood conducted technical sessions on creating realistic injury models using cost-effective materials. Training included simulation of wounds, body fluids, and special effects makeup to enhance clinical realism.

Participants were given practical exposure to case-based scenarios, culminating in a competitive segment titled "Moulage War – Battle of Realism," where teams demonstrated their simulation skills.

The workshop emphasised the growing importance of simulation-based education in healthcare, particularly in improving patient safety, clinical decision-making, and preparedness for real-life emergencies.

Healthcare professionals, educators, and students from across India attended the programme, reflecting rising interest in innovative and affordable medical training methods.

Administration accused of complicity in Sitanadi sand mining scam

UDUPI

Serious allegations of administrative collusion have surfaced regarding sand mining activities in the Nagaramatha region of Hosala village.

Activist Dinesh Ganiga, addressing a press conference at the Udupi Press Club, accused the district administration of facilitating illegal operations under the guise of "sand dune clearance.

"According to Ganiga, a general tender was awarded to an individual named Kusha Kumar to extract $1,13,000$ metric tonnes of sand from the Sitanadi basin. However, an independent study conducted by a retired professor reportedly concluded that the river basin does not contain that volume of sand.

Despite these findings being submitted to the authorities, no action has been taken. Local residents allege that while environmental clearances permit mining only up to a depth of one meter, contractors are digging as deep as three to four meters.

This excessive extraction has led to severe soil erosion, resulting in the destruction of nearby agricultural lands. "When we approach the Deputy Commissioner (DC) with these grievances, we are told to seek redressal in court," Ganiga stated. He further alleged that the administration is using the police department to file cases against locals who protest.

In response to the official apathy, a protest is scheduled for April 13 and 14 on the banks of the Sitanadi, followed by an indefinite hunger strike in front of the DC's office in Manipal starting April 15.

Drone survey ordered to clean polluted Indrani river

UDUPI

In response to growing concerns over pollution in the Indrani river, Udupi Deputy Commissioner Swaroop has directed officials to conduct a drone-based survey to identify sources of contamination.

Chairing a pre-monsoon preparedness meeting at the Satyamurthy Hall of the Udupi City Municipal Council, the Deputy Commissioner said complaints had been received regarding the discharge of wastewater into the river. A field inspection has already been carried out, and the drone survey will help pinpoint areas where untreated waste is entering the water body.

During the meeting, former municipal members expressed concern over continued dumping of waste from the Kapu side despite earlier council resolutions. They criticised officials for inaction, pointing out that residents in the affected areas are facing mosquito menace and health risks.

Members also raised alarm over flood threats in low-lying areas such as Kalmadi and Bannanje, noting that desilting work in the Indrani and Kalmadi rivers has not been carried out. With silt and sand accumulation increasing, the risk of flooding during the monsoon remains high.

Responding to the concerns, municipal officials said additional sanitation workers would be recruited soon, with tenders already floated. At present, each ward is being serviced by only two to three workers, leading to delays in maintenance work.

The meeting also discussed leakage issues in the Varahi drinking water pipeline, with members urging immediate corrective measures.

Konkani music mega convention announced

MANGALURU

Mandd Sobhann has announced the first world Konkani music mega convention, scheduled to be held in Mangaluru from November 3 to 15, marking a major global celebration of Konkani music and culture. The announcement was made during a formal muhoorta and logo launch event at Kalaangann in Shakthinagar, signalling the beginning of preparations for the large-scale international gathering. The convention aims to bring together artists, musicians, and cultural enthusiasts from across the world.

The logo for the event was unveiled by Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister and Dakshina Kannada district in-charge minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, in the presence of several political leaders and cultural figures.

Speakers at the event highlighted the historical roots of the Konkani community, tracing its origins to the Konkan region spanning Maharashtra, Goa, and Karnataka, while noting its global diaspora and continued cultural unity.

Organisers said the convention will feature large-scale musical performances, cultural showcases, and participation from thousands of artistes, making it one of the most ambitious Konkani cultural events ever planned. The initiative is also expected to strengthen efforts toward preserving and promoting the Konkani language and heritage.

COASTAL TECH INNOVATION

NITK launches NOMAD AI edge platform

MANGALURU

National Institute of Technology Karnataka has launched NOMAD (Node for Open-source Mobile AI Deployment), an advanced artificial intelligence platform designed to operate in remote, disaster-prone, and infrastructure-limited environments.

The system is deployed at the institute's beachfront SEARCH research station in Surathkal and is built to support real-time computing where cloud connectivity is unreliable. It focuses on bringing AI processing closer to field conditions such as coastal zones, disaster sites, and remote research locations.

NOMAD operates from a repurposed shipping container and is designed as a self-sufficient unit. It runs on multiple power sources including grid electricity, rooftop solar, a towable solar-battery system, and diesel generator backup, ensuring uninterrupted operation even in unstable conditions.

Connectivity is supported through redundant channels, combining fibre, broadband, and wireless links. The platform integrates edge computing devices, open-source clusters, and high-capacity storage, with plans to connect institutional high-performance computing systems.

The initiative supports applications in edge AI research, coastal monitoring, disaster response, and water systems analysis. It is especially aimed at improving decision-making during emergencies such as floods and landslides when communication networks often fail.

Developed under the guidance of faculty and supported by alumni expertise, NOMAD is also intended as a teaching and research platform for interdisciplinary learning in artificial intelligence and environmental systems.

Experts involved in the project said the platform demonstrates how AI can function effectively at the "edge," enabling faster, localized data processing in critical real-world situations where timing is essential.

QUICK READ

Unknown body found in Bhima River in Kalaburagi

Kalaburagi
An unidentified body was found floating in the Bhima river near Afzalpur town border. Locals spotted the body around 6 pm on April 8 and informed the police. Afzalpur police reached the spot and began an investigation. Officials estimated the deceased to be a man aged between 30 and 35 years. Two locker keys were recovered near the body. Police said the face was damaged and the body had swollen due to water exposure. The body has been sent to the district hospital mortuary. Police have requested the public to share any information for identification.

Minister directs road dip closure work in Haveri

Haveri
Minister Sivananda Patil has instructed officials and contractors of the National Highways Authority to complete the closure of road dips on the Haveri–Akkialur stretch by May. He said the work has been delayed for a long time and must be completed without further excuses. The direction was given while chairing a District Planning Committee meeting at the Zilla Panchayat Hall on Saturday. MLA and Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Lamani, MLA Basavaraja Sivannavar, District Superintendent of Police Yashoda Vantagodi, and other officials attended the meeting. Authorities were urged to speed up road safety works for public convenience.

Storm damages poles, causes power cut

Mandya
A heavy storm caused damage in Holalu village of Mandya taluk, leading to the fall of several electric poles and disruption of power supply. Strong winds and rain uprooted a coconut tree belonging to local resident Hadya Krishna, which fell across key roads in the area. Around 10 to 15 electric poles were damaged on H.D. Choudaiah Alemaneya Road and Punyasree Industries Road, affecting electricity in the village. Large cut-outs of H.D. Kumaraswamy and C.S. Puttaraja were also destroyed due to the storm. The fallen coconut tree reportedly caused losses worth lakhs of rupees. Officials confirmed that no loss of life was reported. However, power supply has been disrupted and is expected to be restored quickly. Chescom officials and staff began repair work early Saturday morning and are working continuously to restore normalcy. Authorities have requested the public to cooperate during the repair process.

MINISTER PROMISES POWER RELIEF FOR HAVERI FARMERS

Minister assured seven hours power supply for farmers, promised infrastructure upgrades, and directed officials to address complaints promptly

HAVERI

Textiles, Sugarcane Development and Agricultural Marketing Minister Sivananda Patil has assured farmers in Haveri district that necessary steps will be taken to improve electricity supply to agricultural pump sets. He said the government is committed to supporting farmers and addressing their long-pending power-related issues.

Chairing a meeting with farmers at the Zilla Panchayat Hall on Saturday, the Minister said all departments, including the energy sector, are working to ensure seven hours of electricity supply to farmers, as promised by the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and Energy Minister. He added that the government is taking steps to upgrade substations and improve transformers across the district.The Minister acknowledged concerns raised by farmers regarding irregular power supply, delayed transformer changes, and pending infrastructure issues. He said Hescom is currently facing financial losses, but assured that efforts are being made to resolve complaints and improve services. He also directed officials to respond promptly to farmers' calls and treat their issues as a priority.

Hubli Electricity Supply Company (Hescom) officials informed that around 300 farmers have already received quick electricity connections. They said efforts are ongoing to provide uninterrupted seven-hour supply, though in some areas electricity is being supplied in staggered phases due to demand.

Hescom Managing Director M.A. Vaishali said additional grants have been allocated to Haveri district and steps are being taken to upgrade substations and replace transformers within 72 hours. She added that sufficient buffer stock of transformers is available and recruitment of 560 candidates will be completed by May end to strengthen operations.

Officials also confirmed that there is no shortage of fertilizers or seeds in the district. The Agriculture Department stated that over 56,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer and more than 1.69 lakh quintals of seeds are available for the current season.

Farmers' representatives raised several issues, including delays in crop insurance payments, replacement of burnt transformers, appointment of village electricians, and maintenance of drinking water units. They also demanded strict action against irregularities in seed and fertilizer distribution.

District officials assured that all concerns would be addressed as per government guidelines. The meeting was attended by MLAs, senior officials, and representatives from Hescom and the Agriculture Department.

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GOVERNMENT FIRST GRADE COLLEGE, KAMALAPUR
NSS & Sports Units jointly organise
10,000 Steps Challenge (Walk for Health Campaign

Students launch "10,000 steps for health" drive

KALABURAGI

Government First Grade College Kamalpur students launched a 10,000-steps walk campaign on World Health Day to promote fitness, healthy living, and prevention of lifestyle diseases

A "10,000 steps walk for health" campaign was launched by students of Government First Grade College in Kamalpur on Saturday, marking World Health Day with a strong message on fitness and healthy living.

The programme was organised under the guidance of college authorities and the National Service Scheme unit, following instructions from government education bodies. The initiative aimed to promote the importance of regular walking and physical activity among youth and the wider public.

College Principal Dr. Lakshmana Bhosle formally inaugurated the event. Speaking on the occasion, organisers highlighted that lifestyle diseases are increasing rapidly and simple habits like walking daily can play a major role in maintaining good health.

After the launch, students took part in a "Youth for Walk" procession starting from the college campus and moving through Kamalpur Bus Stand and Basaveshwar Circle before returning to the college. During the march, students raised slogans encouraging people to adopt walking as a daily habit and to stay physically active.

Faculty members, guest lecturers and administrative staff actively participated in the programme along with more than 150 students. The event saw enthusiastic involvement from teachers and coordinators who supported and guided the students throughout the campaign.

Organisers said the campaign was inspired by national and state-level health awareness initiatives and aimed to build long-term fitness habits among young people. They added that such activities help create awareness about preventive healthcare and reduce the risk of lifestyle-related illnesses.

The programme concluded successfully, with participants expressing confidence that the message of daily walking and fitness would reach the community and encourage healthier living practices.

Allegations of irregular recruitment at Karnataka Central University have surfaced, with objections over appointments and calls for investigation

Illegal recruitment allegations rock Central University

KALABURAGI

Serious allegations of irregularities have surfaced in the recruitment process at Karnataka Central University, Kadaganchi, on Aland Road, raising concerns over transparency in appointments. The issue involves the selection of a Public Relations Officer and Assistant Registrar, which has triggered calls for a detailed investigation.

Reports suggest that the executive council of the university recently approved the appointment of Srikanth Kusura, who is said to be a close associate of Legislative Council Chief Whip N. Ravikumar. Questions were raised after Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, a member of the executive committee, reportedly objected and sought clarity on why the appointment was made without proper consultation.

She has written to Vineet Joshi, Secretary of the Union Higher Education Department, demanding an impartial inquiry into the matter. Activist P. Nandakumar has also alleged that several appointments in the university are being influenced by individuals linked to political and ideological groups rather than academic merit.

He further claimed that candidates with higher scores in the selection process were ignored and that eligibility rules regarding qualifications and professional experience were not properly followed. The controversy has intensified political debate in the region, with demands for accountability and a transparent probe into all recent recruitment decisions at the university. Authorities are yet to issue an official clarification on the allegations.

Forest authority orders return of encroached land

KOLAR

The Appellate Authority and Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Bengaluru, has dismissed the writ petition filed by former Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar and directed him to peacefully hand over encroached forest land in Kolar district.

The order relates to land in Hosahudya village of Srinivasapura taluk, covering Survey No. 1 and Survey No. 2, measuring a total of 60.23 guntas, including six acres and 54 acres 23 guntas of forest land. The authority upheld earlier eviction orders issued by the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Kolar, on June 24, 2011.

In its ruling, the Appellate Authority noted that a joint survey conducted on January 15 and 16, 2025, clearly confirmed encroachment of forest land. It also stated that the findings were in line with directions of the Karnataka High Court in connection with the writ petition.

The authority has instructed Ramesh Kumar to hand over possession of the encroached land to the Forest Department within 30 days of receiving the order. It further stated that if he fails to comply, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Kolar Division, will take necessary steps to evict the encroachment.

The case has drawn political attention in the district, as Ramesh Kumar had earlier accused forest officials of harassing farmers and acting unfairly. His remarks had received support from several legislators across party lines during various KDP meetings held in Kolar, where concerns were raised about the functioning of the forest department.

With the latest order, officials have reinforced that forest land protection measures will be strictly enforced in accordance with legal procedures and court directions.

Leopard killed after porcupine attack in forest

CHAMARAJANAGAR

A young leopard died after being attacked by a porcupine in Bommanahalli village of Gundlupet taluk in Chamarajanagar district. The incident highlights the rare but dangerous encounters between wild animals in forest areas.

The carcass of the one-to-two-year-old male leopard was found near a farm with several porcupine quills piercing its chest, ribs, and face. Forest officials believe the leopard had attempted to hunt the porcupine but was fatally injured during the struggle.

Bandipur Assistant Conservator of Forests Naveen Kumar said the body was discovered in the Kundakere forest area of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. A post-mortem examination has been conducted, and samples have been sent for analysis. The carcass will be disposed of as per forest department rules.

In a separate incident, motorists spotted a leopard crossing a road in Bandipur during the daytime. Officials have advised the public to avoid venturing near forest areas and ensure safety.

Food donation held during Siddalingeshwar Jatra

KALABURAGI

As part of the Sri Siddalingeshwar Jatra Mahotsava held in Ravur village of Shahabad taluk, a food donation service was organised successfully at Basaveshwar Circle with participation from Gram Panchayat staff and local residents. The event was conducted as part of the traditional religious fair celebrations that draw devotees from surrounding areas.

Sri Siddalingeshwar Swamiji blessed the gathering and said that food donation is considered a noble act. He appreciated the Gram Panchayat staff for their service and encouraged them to continue such community welfare activities. He also formally inaugurated the food distribution programme.

During the event, Gram Panchayat officials highlighted the importance of cleanliness awareness among the public and urged people to maintain hygiene in villages and public places. They said such religious gatherings are also an opportunity to promote social responsibility.

Several local leaders and dignitaries attended the programme, including former Gram Panchayat president Sumitra Honnappa Tumkur, Ramachandra Rathod, and other staff members such as bill collectors and office employees. Village elders and residents also actively participated in the event and supported the arrangements.

Officials said the jatra not only serves as a religious celebration but also strengthens community bonding through service activities like food donation. The programme concluded with distribution of meals to devotees and visitors, marking a peaceful and well-organised celebration in Ravur village with cooperation from all sections of the local administration and public participants.

NSS camp highlights rural development message

JEWARGI

A five-day National Service Scheme (NSS) camp was inaugurated at Ganwara village, an adopted village, by Sri Mahalakshmi Women's Arts and Commerce Degree College on Friday, focusing on rural development and social awareness activities. The inaugural ceremony was held at Triviikramananda Saraswati Mahaswamy Math High School, where the event began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp. The camp aims to promote community service and encourage students to contribute to village development.

Former MLA and JD(S) State Secretary S. Doddappa Gowda Patil addressed the gathering and said that the NSS programme reflects the spirit of nation-building. He stressed that true national development is only possible when villages develop. He urged students to actively participate in awareness programmes during the camp, including cleanliness drives, environmental protection, tree plantation, and legal awareness campaigns. He also called for strong messages against social issues such as child marriage and dowry system in the adopted village.

HEALTHY STUDENT LIFE

Yoga and meditation promote healthy student life

HULAKOTI

A special awareness programme on yoga, meditation and pranayama was organised at K.H. Patil Government First Class College in Hulakoti as part of World Health Day 2026 celebrations. College Principal Dr. Sudha Kaujageri said that yoga, meditation and pranayama are the three main pillars of a healthy life.

She advised students to spend some time every day practicing these activities along with academics to maintain both physical and mental well being. She explained that regular practice helps achieve peace, happiness and better concentration in daily life.

NSS Coordinator and History Professor Dr. Appanna Hanje spoke about the rich heritage of yoga and pranayama, calling them ancient treasures of India that have now gained global recognition. He said these practices play an important role in improving mental peace, reading habits and overall personality development. Several faculty members including Dr. Lakshmana Mulagunda, Dr. Nemani Satish, Basavaraja Balaganur Math, Dr. Sarika Patila, Shweta Palanakar and Dr. Manjunath Tylagadi addressed students and explained the importance of these practices in modern life. A practical demonstration was also conducted to show simple techniques that can be followed daily.

The programme was coordinated by Savitri T and attended by professors and students who actively participated and learned the benefits of maintaining a balanced lifestyle through yoga and meditation regularly.

BIDAR HOSTS GRAND JOURNALISTS' STATE CONFERENCE

CM Siddaramaiah urged journalists to uphold constitutional values, support weaker sections, and promote equality inspired by reformers

BIDAR

The 40th State Conference of the Karnataka Working Journalists' Association began on a grand note in Bidar on Saturday, drawing journalists, religious leaders, political representatives, and public figures from across the state. The event was marked by a large procession and a series of symbolic and cultural displays promoting peace and unity.

The conference procession began from Basaveshwar Circle and moved through Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Circle before reaching the Zeera Convention Hall on Janwada Road. As part of the 40th edition celebrations, participants released 40 balloons carrying a message of peace and also displayed symbolic "40 codes," marking the milestone conference. Cultural troupes supported by the Department of Kannada and Culture added colour to the procession.

At the inauguration, Municipal Administration Minister Rahim Khan and other dignitaries joined Swamijis, senior journalists, and association leaders. Sri Nijagunananda Swamiji said journalists play a key role in giving voice to the voiceless and delivering justice to society.

He praised the association's efforts in honouring the media community and urged people to respect responsible journalism.

Speakers at the event said the press plays an important role in guiding society and highlighting issues of justice. They noted that journalism continues to evolve with changing times, but its core responsibility toward the public remains the same.

The main conference was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the Zeera Convention Hall. Speaking for over 35 minutes, he said journalists must always remain pro-people and pro-society, and work towards empowering the weaker sections. He stressed that the media should help spread awareness and give voice to the unheard.

Referring to social equality, the Chief Minister said India's Constitution, framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, reflects unity in diversity. He urged journalists to ensure that constitutional values are upheld in society. He also cited the efforts of social reformers like Basavanna and Mahatma Gandhi, saying their ideals of equality and justice remain relevant today.

Siddaramaiah further said that journalism should help eliminate inequality, caste discrimination, and exploitation. He called for continued efforts toward building a humane and rational society based on equality and awareness.

The event witnessed participation from journalists across Karnataka, along with senior officials and public representatives.

QUICK READ

Farmers offer refreshment to devotees in Chitradurga Fair

Chitradurga

Farmers from Hireguntanur village in Chitradurga taluk distributed traditional refreshments to devotees attending the Dyamalamba Devi fair. As part of the annual practice, they prepared panaka in large pots and carried it in decorated bullock carts with coconut leaves and branches. The carts moved through different parts of the village, offering drinks to relieve the heat and tiredness of devotees. Farmers said they first prayed at the Anjaneyaswamy temple before beginning the service. The event also saw a farmer writing "RCB" on his bulls, wishing the cricket team success in the IPL season.

Madiga Community warns protest over bank recruitment issue

Hospet

Leaders of the Madiga community have warned of a strong protest against BDC Bank if appointments are made without implementing internal reservation. Community leaders said they have been fighting for justice in recruitment and education for the past 30 years. They alleged that the bank is proceeding with hiring without following reservation rules, which they called unfair. State working president Sannamaliyappa and state president Prabhuraj Kodli said they will intensify protests if the issue is not addressed. They urged authorities to ensure proper implementation of internal reservation before continuing recruitment in the bank.

Bus and Lorry Collision on NH-50 Near Hospet

Vijayanagara

A collision between a KKRTC bus and a lorry occurred near a tunnel in Hospet taluk on National Highway 50. The accident took place when both vehicles were reportedly overtaking each other while travelling from Kudligi towards Hospet. Fortunately, no casualties were reported in the incident. However, the front left side of the bus was badly damaged and its windshield shattered. Police said a case has been registered at Hospet Rural Police Station. Authorities are investigating the incident and have urged drivers to follow road safety rules to prevent such accidents on highways.

Krishnamurthy challenges A. Manju for open debate

MAGADI

Magadi Block Congress President Pujaripalya Krishnamurthy has issued a strong open challenge to former MLA A. Manju, asking him to come for a public debate with documents if he stands by his allegations against MLA H.C. Balakrishna.

Speaking at a press conference held at the MLA's home office on Saturday, Krishnamurthy strongly criticized A. Manju, saying that baseless and misleading allegations were being made regarding issues such as a "₹600 crore scam" and the BDCC Bank case. He said a platform for open discussion will be arranged on April 25 at 11 am at Chakrabavi VSSN premises and invited Manju to present evidence there. "If he believes in his claims, let him come with documents. If that date does not suit him, he can fix another time. We are ready for a full debate along with our leader Balakrishna," he said. He added that there would be no backing away from the challenge and demanded accountability for public statements.

Commenting on the 2023 election results, Krishnamurthy said he had consistently worked for the party and denied any role in Manju's defeat. He said internal discussions had taken place with senior leaders, but decisions were not properly acted upon by others involved.

Krishnamurthy challenged A. Manju for a public debate over scam allegations, defended MLA Balakrishna, and denied involvement in Manju's 2023 electoral defeat

He also reacted sharply to remarks made by rival local leaders, accusing them of spreading personal allegations and political propaganda. Without naming individuals directly in some cases, he alleged that certain leaders were trying to gain influence by targeting others unfairly.

Krishnamurthy warned that repeated false accusations would not be tolerated. "If such statements continue, we will be forced to reveal old records and facts," he said, adding that he has always stood firm in political struggles and does not run away from confrontation.

The press conference saw the presence of several local leaders, including Magadi Development Authority President Tatavalu Prakash, former municipal member Shivakumar, Rahman, Belgumba Narasimhaiah, and others. The exchange has further intensified local political tensions in Magadi, with both sides expected to escalate their arguments in the coming days.

Model marriage campaign sets up reception committee

PUTTUR

A reception committee has been formed as part of the "Model Marriage" campaign aimed at creating public awareness against excessive spending in weddings. The campaign is being organised by the Karnataka Sunni Youth Association, and its concluding conference will be held on May 2 at Puttur Fort Grounds. The event is expected to be attended by Indian Grand Mufti Sultanul Ulama A.P. Ustad.

During a preparatory meeting, organisers announced the formation of a large local welcome committee to ensure smooth conduct of the programme. Yusuf Gausi Saja was elected as president of the committee, while Iqbal Bappalige was chosen as convener. Rafique Haji Maidanimule, Managing Director of Royal Group, was appointed treasurer. Officials said a 313-member reception committee has been created along with an advisory panel consisting of religious scholars, community leaders and respected elders. The campaign aims to promote simple marriage practices and discourage unnecessary financial burden on families.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of SYS State President Bashir Saadi from Bengaluru. Vice President Syed Ilyas Thanal from Erumad offered prayers to begin the proceedings. The programme was inaugurated by Bengaluru District Secretary Anas Siddiqui. Several state and district leaders including KM Abubakar Siddique, Muhammad Ali Sakhafi and Mansoor Ali Kotegadde addressed the gathering.

Organisers said the campaign is focused on spreading awareness about simplicity in marriages and strengthening social responsibility within the community.

Minister Sivananda Patil ordered inquiry into alleged Akshara Dasoha procurement irregularities in Savanur and sought strict action against offenders

Probe ordered into Anganwadi purchase irregularities

HAVERI

Minister Sivananda Patil has directed officials to investigate alleged irregularities in the purchase of kitchen staff uniforms and other materials under the Akshara Dasoha programme in Savanur taluk of Haveri district. The instruction was issued during a meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat hall after receiving complaints from the Anganwadi Workers' Union.

The minister, who holds the portfolio of Textiles, Sugarcane Development and Agriculture Marketing, said that reports suggest irregularities in the purchase of uniforms such as aprons, sarees and other items meant for programme staff. He instructed officials to conduct a detailed inquiry and take strict action against those found responsible. He added that a formal report will be submitted after verification of all procurement details.

Officials also informed the minister about separate complaints related to the purchase of milk powder for Anganwadi centres in Hanagal taluk. The minister said appropriate action will be taken if irregularities are confirmed at the government level. He further directed authorities to ensure transparency in all welfare-related purchases.

During the meeting, concerns were also raised about the condition of an Anganwadi building in Inam Honnagal village. The minister instructed officials to arrange a safer alternative building and shift the centre immediately.

Officials said the case is under investigation, and notices have already been issued to several staff members including the CDPO, programme officer, deputy director and others. Senior officials, MLAs and departmental representatives attended the meeting.

Helmet drive urges riders to buy safety gear

HOSAPETE

A special helmet awareness drive was conducted at Puneeth Rajkumar Circle in Hosapete taluk of Vijayanagara district, where officials and the judiciary jointly urged the public to strictly follow road safety rules.

The programme was led under the guidance of Dr. P. Jahnavi, with District Judge K.M. Rajashekar and S. Raghavan participating in the awareness initiative. Police personnel stopped two-wheeler riders who were not wearing helmets and distributed helmets free of cost to a few individuals as part of the campaign.

Addressing the gathering, District Judge K.M. Rajashekar stressed the importance of wearing helmets, saying that while injuries to other parts of the body can often be treated, head injuries can be fatal and may lead to loss of life. He urged both the police department and the public to make helmet usage a strict habit.

Officials announced that a 15-day awareness period has been launched in the district to educate riders about helmet safety. During this period, violators will not be fined immediately. Instead, they will be asked to purchase helmets equivalent to the fine amount, encouraging compliance through awareness rather than punishment.

After the awareness phase, strict enforcement of fines will be implemented for those violating the rule. Authorities said the initiative is aimed at reducing road accidents and saving lives through behavioural change rather than fear of penalties alone.

The campaign has received positive public response, with many appreciating the focus on education and safety. Officials also appealed to citizens to cooperate with traffic rules and understand that road safety begins with individual responsibility.

Grand dedication of historic Bhojalingeshwar Temple

KALABURAGI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah dedicated the newly constructed historic Bhojalingeshwar Temple to the public at Soogur village in Chittapur taluk amid much fanfare and religious fervour.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated a beautifully crafted silver chariot and a welfare pavilion constructed for the benefit of devotees and local residents. The event witnessed a large gathering of devotees, dignitaries, and local leaders.

Minister Priyank Kharge accompanied the Chief Minister and extended his full support during the inauguration ceremony held in his home constituency. The minister played a key role in organizing the event and ensuring its grand success. After formally inaugurating the temple, CM Siddaramaiah arrived at the main stage of a massive public gathering organised nearby. As he stepped onto the stage, enthusiastic supporters and party workers welcomed him with loud cheers and slogans, creating an electrifying atmosphere.

LOCAL ROADS IMPROVED

MLA Bheemanna Naik pushes development works

SIRSI

MLA Bheemanna T. Naik on Saturday inaugurated road development works worth ₹30 lakh in Pragati Nagar under Ward No. 1, marking the start of long-awaited infrastructure improvement in the area. The foundation stone was laid through a bhoomi puja ceremony in the presence of local residents and officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that priority is being given to building quality roads to ensure smooth movement for residents. He assured that more development works will be taken up in the coming days based on local needs and public demand. Residents of the ward expressed happiness, saying that their long-pending request had finally been addressed with timely release of funds and commencement of work.

In another programme, MLA Naik officially flagged off a newly sanctioned modern fire brigade vehicle for Sirsi. The vehicle has been provided by the state government to strengthen emergency response services in the taluk.

He said that advanced vehicles are essential to protect public life and property during emergencies. The addition of the new fire tender, he added, will improve speed and efficiency in rescue and firefighting operations. Fire department officials and public representatives were present at the event.

In Siddapur, MLA Naik participated in a separate programme where he encouraged students and parents to focus on education and creativity. He urged parents to enroll their children in government schools, saying they provide quality education and opportunities for all-round development.

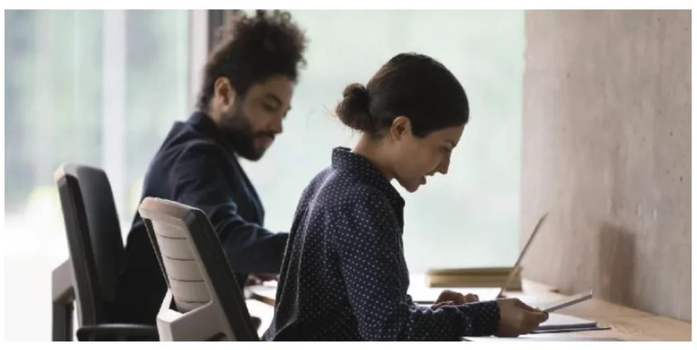
He advised students not to limit themselves to classroom learning alone but to actively participate in cultural events, meetings, and educational activities. He said such exposure helps build confidence, creativity, and a better future.

The MLA also took part in a cultural procession at Sri Kote Anjaneya Temple in Bedkani earlier in the day, which added a festive atmosphere to the educational programme. School officials and organizers said the event was well-coordinated and encouraged active student participation, making it both informative and engaging for attendees.

Bihar enforces strict social media rules for govt employees

The measure aims regulate employee conduct online and prevent misuse of digital platforms

PATNA



The Bihar government has officially implemented new rules regulating the use of social media by its employees, introducing strict guidelines and disciplinary measures for violations.

Approved earlier this year in January, the Bihar Government Servants' Conduct (Amendment) Rules, 2026 were introduced under Article 309 of the Constitution of India.

The amendment applies to all government employees across the state and became effective immediately upon its official publication. Authorities have described the decision as a necessary step to regulate employee conduct online and prevent misuse of digital platforms.

Under the new guidelines, government employees are strictly prohibited from expressing personal opinions on social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram regarding government policies, welfare schemes, or judicial decisions. This includes remarks related to the Supreme Court of India and various High Courts, unless prior approval is obtained. Any violation of these provisions will be treated as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

The rules further prohibit employees from using official email addresses or mobile numbers to create or manage personal social media accounts. Additionally, the creation or use of fake profiles, anonymous identities, or pseudonyms to share content has been strictly banned.

In a bid to maintain confidentiality and professionalism within government offices, the sharing of photos, videos, or official documents from workplace premises has been completely restricted. Employees are also barred from filming reels or conducting live streams inside offices, with violations inviting strict penalties.

The regulations also emphasize political neutrality. Employees are not allowed to express support for or opposition to any political party, media organization, or public figure online. Posting content that could be deemed inflammatory or sensitive, particularly relating to caste, religion, or social issues, is strictly forbidden.

In a notable change, the government has revised rules concerning competitive examinations. Government employees will now be permitted to appear for such exams only once during their entire service tenure, and only after obtaining a mandatory No Objection Certificate. Previously, employees were allowed up to five attempts.

The new framework signals Bihar's intent to enforce accountability and discipline among its workforce in the digital era.

Vijay to address rally in Kanyakumari ahead of TN polls

CHENNAI

With campaigning entering its final phase ahead of the April 23 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) leader Joseph Vijay is set to address a major public rally in Kanyakumari district on Sunday.

The rally will see Vijay campaigning for TVK candidates contesting across six key Assembly constituencies in the district — Kanyakumari, Nagercoil, Colachel, Vilavancode, Killiyoor, and Padmanabhapuram.

The highlight of the visit will be a large public meeting scheduled at the Vivekananda College Ground near Kanyakumari, where thousands of supporters are anticipated to gather.

Party officials had initially sought permission to hold the rally from 2 pm to 10 pm. However, authorities granted approval with restrictions, limiting the event duration from 2 pm to 8 pm. Officials cited security and regulatory concerns while imposing the six-hour cap.

The rally comes at a critical juncture as the Election Commission of India has mandated that campaigning must conclude by the evening of April 21. With limited time remaining, political parties across the state have intensified their outreach activities to connect with voters.

Leading the campaign charge for the ruling party, M. K. Stalin continues an aggressive schedule, addressing multiple public meetings daily. Meanwhile, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, representing the opposition, is actively conducting roadshows across various constituencies to consolidate support.

In addition, Seeman remains on an extensive campaign trail, touring different regions to mobilise voters for his party candidates.

Ahead of Vijay's visit, senior TVK leaders Anand and Sengottaiyan are overseeing preparations in Kanyakumari district.

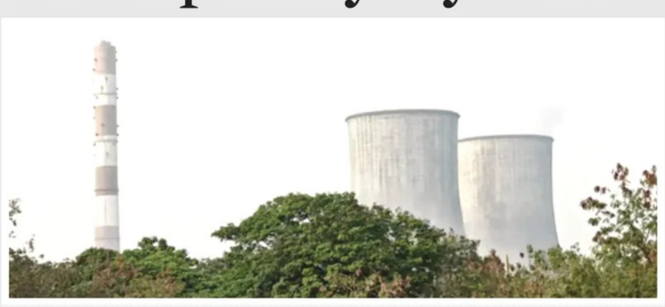
The inspection includes reviewing security arrangements, stage construction, and logistical coordination to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. Vijay's rally is being viewed as a significant boost to TVK's campaign, particularly in southern Tamil Nadu.

India targets 100 GW nuke power capacity by 2047

NEW DELHI

India has set an ambitious goal to expand its nuclear power capacity to at least 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2047, coinciding with the centenary of its independence. The move reflects the country's long-term strategy to strengthen energy security, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and transition toward cleaner energy sources. According to a recent report by Khaleej Times, India currently operates 24 nuclear reactors with a combined capacity of 8,780 megawatts electric (MWe). Additionally, eight reactors with a total capacity of 6,028 MWe are under construction. Government projections suggest that nuclear capacity will increase to around 22 GW by the early 2030s, before witnessing a substantial scale-up to meet the 100 GW target by 2047. To achieve this significant expansion, India is adopting a dual strategy that combines the development of large-scale reactors and smaller modular systems. The country is focusing on indigenous 700 MWe pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs) as well as importing high-capacity reactors for greenfield projects. At the same time, innovative technologies such as Bharat Small Modular Reactors (BSMRs) with 200 MWe capacity and smaller SMR-55 units are being developed to ensure flexibility and faster deployment.

A major milestone in India's nuclear journey was reached on April 6, 2026, when the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu achieved first criticality.



This marks the initiation of a controlled nuclear fission chain reaction and represents a key advancement in indigenous nuclear technology. The achievement is expected to significantly enhance fuel efficiency and sustainability in the long run. India's nuclear programme is guided by a well-defined three-stage strategy aimed at optimising its limited uranium resources while tapping into abundant thorium reserves.

Government of Karnataka
Minor Irrigation and Ground water Development Division, Chitradurga

NO.EE/MI&GWD DIV/CTA/PB-1/TENDER NOTIFICATION: 01/2026-27/ DATE:08-04-206

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA By order and in his name the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Groundwater Development Division, Chitradurga KTPP Rules, 2000 for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Community, Category-I & II(m) as amended Rules and Standard Bid Document K.W.-1, 2 & 3, 4 Item rate tender in One and two cover system (K.W-1, 2 & 3, 4) as per KTPP act-2000 with latest amendments is invited from the eligible contractors registered in KPWD (Minimum amount put to Tender-Rs. 10.00 Lakhs and Maximum amount put to Tender Rs. 200.00 Lakhs) for the 10 works through KPP-procurement portal.

Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka KPP-PORTLA website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ from 09-04-2026 Last Date & Time for enquiries about tender 24-04-2026 upto 5.30 P.M., Last Date for submission of Tenders 27-04-2026 upto 4.00 P.M. Opening of Technical bid for Tenders Date: 28-04-2026 after 4.30 P.M (If possible). Opening of Finanical bid Date:29-04-2026 after 4.30 P.M (If possible). Tenders may be submitted along with EMD and tender fee (Mode of payment should be online only as prescribed in website). Amount mentioned in KPP-portal is final for the amount put to tender & the E.M.D. Additional Information regarding works may be obtained from the Division Office during office hours & from KPP-procurement help desk No.080-25501216 & 080-25501227.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/ 29/2026-27

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MI, Chitradurga

BrahMos deals deepen India's role in Indo-Pacific security

NEW DELHI

As India seeks to position Southeast Asia as a key market for the BrahMos missile, the supersonic cruise weapon – jointly developed by India and Russia – has generated significant interest in the region amid growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

Its speed, precision strike capability, and multi-platform deployment – from land and sea to air and submarine –make it a formidable weapon for enhancing regional defence capabilities.

According to a report in India Narrative, with speeds between Mach 2.8 and Mach 3 exceeding many conventional cruise missiles used by naval forces globally the missile offers a strike range of over 400 kilometres and can be launched from a range of platforms.

The missile is gaining traction amid the growing urgency among South China Sea littoral states to strengthen their deterrence capabilities. Its deployment is aimed at countering any aggressive naval posture by China in asserting its territorial claims over the South China Sea, which overlap with those of other littoral states. One way to bolster such capacity is by enhancing Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities, the report detailed.

An emerging pattern can be observed among countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia in this regard. While China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has developed formidable A2/AD capabilities, anti-ship missiles such as BrahMos enable smaller countries to adopt similar strategies, it added.

According to the report, the ongoing conflict in West Asia has prompted US allies and partners in East Asia to view Washington's security guarantees with growing scepticism, against the backdrop of the visible shift of American missile and naval assets from the Pacific to West Asia.

CM Yadav to release 35th instalment of 'Ladli Behna'

BHOPAL

In a major boost to women's empowerment in Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will release the 35th instalment of the popular 'Ladli Behna Yojana' from Ashta in Sehore district on Sunday.

He will directly transfer Rs 1,500 into the bank accounts of over 1.25 crore women beneficiaries across the state through a single-click DBT (direct benefit transfer).

The event, to be held in Ashta, marks another milestone in the scheme that has become an additional source of income for women in the state.

The monthly assistance under Ladli Behna Yojana was earlier Rs 1,250 and has now been enhanced to Rs 1,500 per month. This regular financial support helps women manage household expenses, make small savings, and even explore self-employment opportunities.

The state government has indicated that in the coming days, women beneficiaries will also be linked with skill development and employment initiatives to make them more self-reliant.

Over 1.25 crore women are currently benefiting from the scheme, which continues to strengthen financial inclusion and decision-making power at the grassroots level.

The direct transfer ensures transparency and eliminates middlemen, allowing every rupee to reach the intended beneficiary promptly.

Alongside the instalment release, Chief Minister Yadav will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for several development projects worth over Rs 184 crore in the region. Of these projects, the construction of the Sandipani School building in Ashta, a ghat on the Parvati River, the rejuvenation of the Newaj River in Jawar, a Primary Health Centre in Mehatwada, a Sub-Tehsil building in Siddiganj, a Revenue Office in Ashta, and a bridge on the Ashta-Shujalpur road will have a capital investment of Rs 115 crore.

Additionally, the CM will perform Bhoomi Pujan for projects amounting to Rs 69 crore.

These include construction of school buildings, police housing, a hostel in Ichhawar, roads, community halls, and drinking water schemes under the Amrut 2.0 mission.

Within Ashta city, works such as RCC (reinforced cement concrete) drain construction, road widening and beautification, development of the vegetable market, and beautification of the Pandu Shila area will also be taken up.

Government of Karnataka
CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, CHAMARAJANAGARA

PH.NO: 08226-222035 Fax No: 08226-222566
email add: ka.chamarajanagara.cmc@gmail.com website add: www.chamarajanagaracity.mrc.gov.in
No: CMC/CHN/TS/AEE/PR-05/2026-27 Date: 09.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through The Government Of Karnataka Public Procurement Portal)

Under the CMC FUND a tender has been invited through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal as per the (Karnataka Public Procurement Transparency Directions 1999-2000 Act 2000). Eligible tenderers can participate in the tender through the portal http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.

SL. No	Work Details	Estimated Amount (Rs in Lakhs)	Amount of E.M.D (Rs in Lakhs)
1	DMA/2026-27/SE7643 Supply of manpower service for water supply maintenance and park maintenance in chamarajanagara cmc limits.	102.30	2.00

1. Last Date for Submission of Tender (Through e-portal Only): 24.04.2026 Upto 5.30 PM, Date of opening of Technical bid Dated: 27.04.2026 after 11.00 AM
2. Further details can be obtained from the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Signature /-
(Parashuram M Chalavadi)
Commissioner
CMC, Chamarajanagara

Signature /-
(Smt. ShriRoopa I.A.S)
Administrator, CMC,
Chamarajanagara

No: DIPR: CHANAGARA: 33: 2026-27

SUPER POWER IN THE MAKING

INDIA INCREASINGLY SIGNING FTAS TO ACCELERATE ECONOMIC MOMENTUM

NEW DELHI

India is increasingly signing free trade agreements (FTAs) with economies where trade corridors are already expanding, and supply chains are already forming, a new report has said.

These FTAs are functioning as accelerators of existing economic momentum, said the report in Trade Finance Global. In a fragmented global trading system, this targeted approach appears to be particularly resilient.

While tariff threats become common ground elsewhere in the world, India is focusing on approaching trade with care and commitment, expanding its services provisions and translating its investment pipelines into new industrial capacity, writes Anna Mahjar-Barducci.

The report states that between fiscal year 2020-21 and FY 2024-25, India's trade with strategic FTA partners grew by 92% – more than double the 41.5% increase in India's overall merchandise trade with the rest of the world. The country has steadily expanded its network of free trade agreements over the past few years to reach nine FTAs spanning as many as 38 countries. Starting with India–Mauritius in 2021, the India–UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement followed in May 2022. The India–Australia Economic and Trade Agreement was implemented in December 2022. India then signed the EFTA TEPA on March 10, 2024, which entered into force on October 1, 2025. The India–UK CETA was signed in July 2025, and the India–Oman CEPA in December 2025. The India–New Zealand FTA was announced on December 22, 2025, followed by the India–EU FTA on January 27, 2026.

With the United States, we have delivered a framework for an interim agreement on 7th February 2026 and cemented our global trade footprint, according to an official statement.

These agreements are aimed to benefit farmers whose products now have access to the developed world. They are for entrepreneurs, women-led MSMEs exporting garments, leather and handicrafts with new competitiveness.

QUICK READ

Suspicious Rs 3.70L seized from AE in Raj ACB surprise check

Jaipur

The Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday recovered Rs 3.70 lakh in suspicious cash from an Assistant Engineer during a surprise check in Baran district. The cash was seized from Mahendra Singh, posted at the Municipality of Anta, during an operation carried out by the ACB's Karauli unit following specific intelligence inputs, officials said. he operation was carried out by the ACB Karauli Unit following specific intelligence received by the Bureau Headquarters. According to the Director General of ACB, Govind Gupta, the Bureau had received credible information through sources that Mahendra Singh had amassed a substantial amount of illicit cash and was expected to travel to his hometown in Hindaun City, Karauli district, either on Friday evening or Saturday morning.

Delhi cops arrest man in Bhubaneswar for suspected terror links

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have arrested a 22-year-old man from Bhubaneswar for suspected links with a terror outfit, an official statement said on Saturday. The accused, identified as Sheikh Imran, a resident of Unit-6 area in Ganga Nagar locality, was arrested by a joint team of Odisha and Delhi Police for his alleged connection with anti-national activities, it said. Imran came under the police scanner after a special cell of the Delhi Police picked up some youths in the national capital a week ago and scrutinised their social media posts, the statement said. On the basis of interrogation of the youths and analysis of their social media posts, an Odisha link was found, and Sheikh Imran was apprehended, it said.

LG Sinha launches 100-day anti-drug drive in Jammu

JAMMU

Spearheading a decisive battle against the drug menace, the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday launched the historic mass movement for a Drug-Free Jammu Kashmir from MA Stadium in Jammu. The Lieutenant Governor flagged-off Padyatra and joined the public representatives, senior officials and thousands of citizens in the walkathon from MA Stadium to Parade Ground, marking the beginning of 100-days intensive campaign under Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan. Addressing a massive gathering, the Lieutenant Governor gave a clarion call to make Jammu Kashmir free from the scourge of drugs. We have given voice to a resolve that will reach every village, town, city, home, and heartbeat in Union Territory, fulfilling the pledge of a drug-free region.

Shah accuses Mamata of ignoring crimes against women

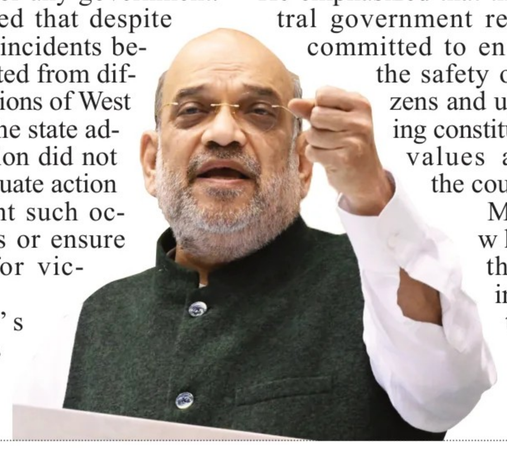
'The safety and dignity of women should be a top priority for any government'

KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched a sharp attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, alleging that her government failed to act while women in various parts of the state faced harassment and violence.

Addressing a public gathering, Amit Shah accused the state leadership of turning a blind eye to incidents involving the alleged torture and humiliation of women. He claimed that such acts were carried out by individuals backed by the ruling All India Trinamool Congress, raising serious concerns about law and order in the state.

The Union Home Minister stated that the safety and dignity of women should be a top priority for any government. He alleged that despite multiple incidents being reported from different regions of West Bengal, the state administration did not take adequate action to prevent such occurrences or ensure justice for victims.



Shah's remarks come amid an intensifying political climate, with opposition parties increasingly targeting the West Bengal government over governance and security issues. He emphasized that the central government remains committed to ensuring the safety of citizens and upholding constitutional values across the country.

Meanwhile, the ruling party in West Bengal has strongly denied such allegations in the past, often accusing opposition leaders of politicizing isolated incidents. Leaders from the Trinamool Congress have maintained that law enforcement agencies in the state act promptly and that efforts are continuously made to ensure women's safety. The exchange highlights the growing political tensions between the Centre and the West Bengal government, especially on issues related to governance and public safety. As political rhetoric intensifies, such statements are expected to further fuel debates ahead of upcoming electoral battles.

Row over Misra's remarks on 1990s Ayodhya decisions

LUCKNOW

A political controversy erupted on Saturday following remarks by Ram Mandir Construction Committee Chairman Nripendra Misra, who said that decisions during critical events like the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid were largely driven by political leadership rather than bureaucratic officials.

Recalling the developments of that period, Misra said that in 1992, despite reports indicating a collapse of law and order in Ayodhya, the then Chief Minister Kalyan Singh had issued clear instructions that police should not open fire on 'Karsevaks'.

He also referred to his tenure serving under different political administrations, including that of former Chief Minister late Mulayam Singh Yadav, noting the contrast in approaches adopted by the two leaders during moments of crisis.

Reacting to Misra's remarks, Uttar Pradesh Minister Jaiveer Singh told IANS, The entire world knows that no matter who the principal secretary is, the decision of the Chief Minister is followed. Whatever Mulayam Singh Yadav had decided, it had to be followed by Misra and other officials even though they did not agree.

BJP spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo also criticised the actions of the Mulayam Singh Yadav government, saying, No one can justify what Mulayam Singh Yadav's government did to Kar Sevaks. It was brutal and a big attack on the Sanatanis. However, Samajwadi Party spokesperson Rajkumar Bhati offered a sharply different interpretation, claiming that Misra himself had earlier indicated that the decision to open fire was taken at the administrative level. Nripendra Misra had said that he had given the orders to fire.

'Voter bribery': Petition in SC seeks cancellation of TN Assembly polls

NEW DELHI

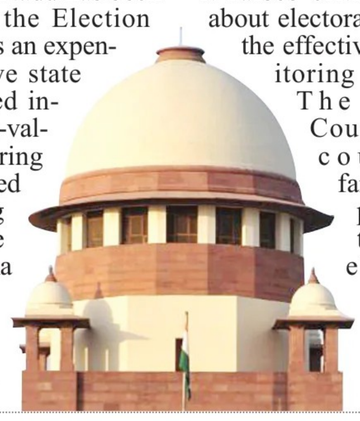
A petition has been filed before the Supreme Court of India seeking the cancellation of the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, alleging widespread voter bribery and failure of authorities to ensure free and fair polls. The plea raises serious concerns about the integrity of the electoral process in the state.

The writ petition, filed by Tamil Nadu resident K.K. Ramesh, urges the Election Commission of India and the Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer to annul the 2026 Assembly elections. The petitioner claims that the electoral process has been vitiated due to rampant distribution of cash, gifts, liquor, and other inducements aimed at influencing voters.

According to the petition, major political parties, including the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Bharatiya Janata Party, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, and the Indian National Congress, have allegedly engaged in large-scale bribery. The plea claims that voters are being enticed with cash payments and freebies such as laptops, televisions, grinders, mixers, fans, as well as livestock including goats and cows.

The petitioner argued that despite being aware of such practices, the Election Commission has failed to take effective steps to curb them. Emphasising the gravity of the issue, the plea stated that bribery undermines the very foundation of democracy and called for strict measures to preserve the sanctity of elections.

The petition also pointed out that Tamil Nadu has been classified by the Election Commission as an expenditure-sensitive state due to repeated instances of high-value seizures during elections. It cited data indicating that during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, enforcement agencies seized cash, precious metals, drugs, and liquor worth Rs 1,324.83 crore in the state. Similarly, seizures during the 2021 Assembly elections were estimated at around Rs 1,000 crore.



Highlighting alleged systemic malpractice, the petitioner claimed that in several constituencies, voters were offered between Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000 per vote. It further alleged that political parties have developed sophisticated methods of distributing cash, making it difficult for voters to refuse such inducements.

The case is expected to draw significant attention as it raises critical questions about electoral integrity and the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms. The Supreme Court's response could have far-reaching implications for the conduct of elections not only in Tamil Nadu but across the country.

Mamata slams BJP, terms UCC a threat to rights, diversity

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday strongly criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party's proposal to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state, alleging that it would undermine people's rights and weaken the country's long-standing cultural and religious diversity. Addressing a public rally in Keshiary in West Midnapore district, Banerjee voiced sharp opposition to the proposed Uniform Civil Code, warning that such a move could restrict citizens' freedom to practice their religion according to their customs and traditions. She emphasised that India is a diverse nation where different communities follow distinct personal laws, particularly in matters such as marriage, inheritance, and social customs. Highlighting this diversity, Banerjee pointed out that Hindus, Scheduled Castes, tribal communities, minorities, and Christians each adhere to their own religious practices and traditions. She argued that imposing a single code would disregard these differences and impose uniformity on a society built on pluralism. According to her, respecting diversity is essential to preserving the country's social fabric.

The Trinamool Congress supremo further alleged that the BJP's push for UCC reflects an attempt to centralise authority over cultural and social practices. She warned that such a policy could extend beyond personal laws and potentially impact education, traditions, and community identity. Urging voters to reflect carefully, she claimed that the proposal could lead to a loss of individual freedoms and cultural autonomy.

Her remarks came a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the BJP's intention to implement the Uniform Civil Code in West Bengal while unveiling the party's 'Sankalp Patra' for the upcoming Assembly elections.

TMC has again started dirty trick of fake video ahead of polls: Modi

KOLKATA

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi claimed on Saturday that before the Assembly elections in West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress had again started the dirty trick of circulating fake videos in the market to gain political mileage out of that.

He was referring to the recent video-cum-audio clip released by the Trinamool Congress accusing former party legislator Humayun Kabir of entering into a Rs 1,000 crore deal with the BJP to divide Muslim voters in the state.

However, the Prime Minister refrained from directly naming Kabir or directly referring to that video clip.

As the election dates are nearing, Trinamool Congress is sensing defeat. So they have started making false propaganda by circulating fake and Artificial Intelligence-generated videos. They have done this in Assam too. I am warning you. Do not get misled by such fake videos. Go out to vote in large numbers. Make the BJP win, PM Modi said while addressing a rally at Jangipur in minority-dominated Murshidabad district on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister also said that at no cost, will the BJP allow Hindu Bengalis to be a minority in West Bengal. So be united, go to vote, and get us elected.

Every single vote will be a blessing for us, the Prime Minister said, while assuring that a son of the soil and a Bengali-speaking individual will be the Chief Minister in the new state government.

He said that this time, the Trinamool Congress will not be allowed to form the government with votes cast by illegal infiltrators. Hence, this vote is not meant just for a change of regime. But this vote is also for protecting the identity of West Bengal, the Prime Minister said.

He also assured the state government employees of paying Dearness Allowances at par with central government employees.

Talks are on to introduce the 8th Pay Commission Nationally. The state government employees in West Bengal will not be deprived of that. The Dearness Allowance payments will automatically increase. They will get the benefits of the Pay Commission immediately after the BJP government is formed in West Bengal, PM Modi said.

India evacuates 312 stranded fishermen from Iran amid tensions

NEW DELHI

India has successfully evacuated another 312 fishermen stranded in Iran, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced on Saturday.

The evacuation, facilitated through Armenia, is part of India's ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of its citizens amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

Taking to social media platform X, Jaishankar confirmed the safe return of the fishermen and expressed gratitude to the Armenian government for its cooperation. He also thanked his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan for enabling the smooth transit of Indian nationals from Iran to India. This marks another significant step in India's evacuation operations in the conflict-affected region. Earlier, on April 5, a group of 345 Indian fishermen had safely arrived in Chennai after being evacuated through Armenia. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, these efforts are part of a coordinated mission to bring back Indians stranded due to the ongoing regional instability.

Officials revealed that more than 1,200 Indian nationals have been evacuated from Iran so far, with 996 of them routed through Armenia. The Armenian government has played a crucial role in facilitating safe passage during the crisis, highlighting strong diplomatic coordination between the two nations. Meanwhile, diplomatic developments are unfolding in Islamabad, where delegations from the United States and Iran have gathered for high-level negotiations aimed at easing tensions in the Gulf region. J. D. Vance arrived in Islamabad to lead the American delegation for the talks, expressing optimism about a positive outcome.

The evacuation, facilitated through Armenia, is part of India's ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of its citizens amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

The negotiations represent the first formal engagement between Washington and Tehran in this phase of the conflict, following a fragile two-week ceasefire. However, challenges persist, including ongoing military actions and disagreements over regional dynamics, particularly involving Israel and Hezbollah.

The United States delegation also includes key figures such as Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, who are expected to push for a structured negotiation framework. The outcome of these talks is being closely watched, as it could significantly impact stability in the Middle East and the global economic outlook.

India continues to monitor the situation closely while prioritising the safety and evacuation of its citizens from affected regions.

DELHI PLAYING GOOD ROLE

I DON'T SEE ANY COMPETITION WITH PAKISTAN: THAROOR

NEW DELHI

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Saturday defended India's approach to the ongoing West Asia conflict, stating that New Delhi is playing a very good role by actively engaging with regional leaders, while rejecting the Opposition's allegations that Pakistan's emerging role as a mediator reflects poorly on India's foreign policy.

His remarks came as delegations from the US and Iran reached Islamabad for negotiations aimed at addressing the escalating tensions in West Asia.

Speaking to reporters after attending the National History Conference in New Delhi, Tharoor said Pakistan's involvement stems from its own strategic compulsions, which differ significantly from India's interests. Pakistan has skin in the game. It shares a 900 km-long-border with Iran and also has a significant Shia population. If the conflict escalates, all the refugees will come to Pakistan. Pakistan's stake is different in this game from ours. I don't see any competition with Pakistan when it comes to this, he said.

Emphasising that the larger objective should be peace, Tharoor noted that India stands to benefit from stability in the region regardless of who facilitates it.

Peace should prevail, and everyone wants that. This war has severely affected India… We want a peace resolution to be reached. We all know how the energy supply is disrupted. Over one crore Indians are also stranded in Gulf nations amid this war… In view of all this, the end to this war is in India's favour, no matter who mediates — be it Pakistan or someone else, he said.

Highlighting India's diplomatic engagement, he added, India's interest is very much in terms of peace. We should monitor the situation closely. Our Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister and Petroleum Minister are all in touch with the leaders of that region, and we should remain in constant touch… We should absolutely hope that peace comes as a result of these efforts.

It does not matter who brings about the peace. If peace comes, it does not matter who brought about it; however, if peace fails to come, we should analyse if there is anything we can do to contribute to a different outcome in future.

QUICK READ

Third Point exits CoStar, abandons proxy battle

New York

Hedge fund Third Point, led by investor Daniel Loeb, has exited its entire stake in CoStar Group and will not pursue a planned proxy fight, according to a letter cited by Reuters. The activist investor had earlier signaled intentions to nominate directors and push for strategic changes at the real estate data company, which owns platforms like Apartments.com and Homes.com. However, the firm concluded that its original investment thesis no longer held and decided to withdraw completely. CoStar Group shares were previously a target of activist pressure as Third Point sought operational restructuring and greater focus on core businesses. Third Point, founded by Daniel Loeb, has periodically engaged in such campaigns but stepped back in this case.

DBS Bank manager jailed seven weeks over forgery

Singapore

Singapore authorities have sentenced an Indian-origin wealth planning manager to seven weeks in jail for forging bank statements to support insurance policy sales to Japanese clients. Vijendren Tanapal, 38, committed the offences while working at DBS Bank, selling Manulife insurance products. He pleaded guilty to two charges, with several other similar offences considered during sentencing in Singapore. Police began investigating after DBS flagged forged documents linked to multiple Japanese clients, leading to court proceedings years later. The court noted there was no discernible financial loss to DBS, and the accused is no longer employed by the bank, with bail set at SGD15,000 and sentencing delayed until July 31 date fixed.

US denies Iranian claim of agreeing to unfreeze assets amid talks

No such agreement exists and the status of these funds remains a critical point of contention in international relations and regional stability.

ISLAMABAD

The White House has rejected reports suggesting that the United States agreed to release blocked Iranian assets during ongoing peace negotiations in Islamabad, amid heightened diplomatic activity between the two countries.

The clarification comes as US and Iranian delegations continue talks mediated by Pakistan aimed at stabilising a fragile ceasefire and addressing broader issues linked to the 2026 Iran conflict. Officials said the claim circulating in media reports is inaccurate and not part of any agreement.

The issue of frozen Iranian funds has become one of the key sticking points in the negotiations, alongside demands related to sanctions relief, regional security arrangements, and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global shipping route.

According to reports, Iranian sources had suggested that Washington had agreed to unfreeze billions of dollars in assets held in foreign banks as part of a potential breakthrough. However, U.S. officials have firmly denied such concessions at this stage.

The diplomatic discussions in Islamabad continue under intense international scrutiny, with both sides maintaining sharply different positions on core issues. While mediation efforts led by Pakistan have enabled dialogue, major gaps remain in expectations and conditions for a long-term settlement.

SUMMARY

- The White House denied reports claiming the US would release blocked Iranian funds.
- The clarification comes amid ongoing US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad.
- Negotiations are being mediated by Pakistan following a fragile ceasefire.
- Iran had reportedly claimed progress on unfreezing billions in assets abroad.
- US officials said no agreement on releasing frozen funds has been made.
- Frozen Iranian assets remain a major sticking point in talks.
- Other issues include sanctions relief and regional security arrangements.
- Talks continue despite major differences between both sides.

Despite conflicting claims, both sides have indicated a willingness to continue engagement, though progress remains uncertain as key disputes remain unresolved.

Khattar offers prayers at Simtokha Dzong

His visit highlights cultural ties and strengthening bilateral energy cooperation.

THIMPU

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar offered prayers at the historic Simtokha Dzong in Bhutan during his official visit, highlighting the deep cultural, spiritual, and diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan.

The visit forms part of his broader engagements in the Himalayan nation aimed at strengthening cooperation in energy, infrastructure, and particularly hydropower development, which remains a cornerstone of bilateral relations. Officials said the trip underscores the continuity of high-level exchanges between the two neighbours.

Simtokha Dzong, one of Bhutan's oldest fortresses, holds significant historical and religious importance and is regarded as a symbol of the country's rich cultural heritage. Khattar's visit to the site reflected the shared cultural respect and civilisational links between the two countries.

During the visit, discussions also focused on ongoing and future collaboration in the energy sector, including hydropower projects and cross-border electricity trade. These initiatives are seen as critical to Bhutan's economy and India's clean energy transition goals.

India and Bhutan share a close developmental partnership, with hydropower cooperation forming a key pillar of their economic engagement. India has been a major partner in supporting Bhutan's energy infrastructure development, contributing to both generation capacity and grid connectivity.

The visit also included interactions with Bhutanese officials to review progress on existing projects and explore new opportunities for collaboration in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure development.

Officials noted that such engagements reinforce strategic trust and regional stability while promoting sustainable growth. The partnership is also aligned with broader regional goals of clean energy transition and climate-friendly development.

The visit concluded with emphasis on continued cooperation, reflecting the enduring friendship and mutual support between India and Bhutan across multiple sectors.

The discussions explored new opportunities for collaboration in both traditional and emerging energy sectors

India-US discuss deeper energy, nuclear co-op

NEW DELHI

India and the United States have held high-level discussions aimed at expanding cooperation in civil nuclear energy, LPG exports, and emerging areas such as coal gasification, strengthening their broader strategic energy partnership.

During his visit to the US, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri engaged in talks with US Energy Secretary Chris Wright focused on advancing energy security and deepening bilateral energy trade. The discussions explored new opportunities for collaboration in both traditional and emerging energy sectors.

According to the Indian Embassy in Washington, the dialogue centred on strengthening the India-US Energy Partnership and identifying avenues to enhance long-term cooperation in energy supply chains and technology exchange. Both sides emphasised the importance of reliable and diversified energy sources.

US Ambassador to India Sergei Gor noted that the United States is prepared to expand cooperation with India in civil nuclear energy, alongside potential engagement in coal gasification projects and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) exports. Officials said these areas could significantly enhance bilateral energy trade.

The talks also follow recent policy developments in India aimed at facilitating broader nuclear cooperation frameworks, which are expected to enable greater collaboration in advanced reactor technologies and fuel-cycle management.

Energy cooperation was highlighted as a key pillar of the India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership, alongside defence and technology ties. Both countries reiterated their shared interest in ensuring energy security and supporting sustainable development goals.

Officials said the discussions reflect a growing convergence between New Delhi and Washington on the need for resilient energy systems amid global supply uncertainties. The engagement is expected to pave the way for deeper commercial partnerships and long-term strategic alignment in the energy sector.

Prince Harry sued over Africa charity dispute

LONDON

A charity co-founded by Prince Harry in Africa has filed a defamation lawsuit against him following a dispute over its leadership and governance, according to court records in London.

The organisation, Sentebale, which supports young people living with HIV in Botswana and Lesotho, alleges that Harry and former trustee Mark Dyer made statements that caused reputational and operational harm. The case, filed in the High Court, involves claims of libel or slander.

Sentebale said the legal action follows a "coordinated adverse media campaign" that began in March 2025, which it claims disrupted operations and affected its leadership and partners. No detailed court filings have been made publicly available so far.

A spokesperson for Prince Harry and Dyer has strongly rejected the allegations, describing them as "offensive and damaging," and maintaining that the claims are without merit.

The dispute stems from internal disagreements within the charity that escalated in 2023 over governance and fundraising strategy. Both founders stepped down as patrons in 2025 after tensions between trustees and leadership intensified.

The situation further worsened after public accusations of bullying and mismanagement were exchanged between parties. A review by the Charity Commission for England and Wales criticised all sides for allowing the conflict to become public, though it found no evidence of systemic misconduct.

The case marks a rare instance of legal action against Prince Harry, who has previously been involved primarily as a claimant in privacy-related lawsuits against British media organisations.

Kirti Vardhan Singh offers prayers in Naypyidaw visit

MYANMAR

Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh offered prayers at the Maravijaya Pagoda in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, during his official visit. The visit is part of his four-day trip from April 8 to April 11, 2026, where he is attending the inauguration of Myanmar's new president and holding diplomatic engagements. He said the teachings of Lord Buddha continue to guide the shared spiritual traditions and people-to-people ties between India and Myanmar. During the visit, he also met senior Myanmar leaders and handed over a letter of felicitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President U Min Aung Hlaing. India reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, development partnership, and regional connectivity with Myanmar going forward.

US voters give record low marks to economy

WASHINGTON

Americans are giving historically low ratings to the US economy as inflation rises sharply, creating political pressure ahead of upcoming midterm elections, according to a Reuters report.

The surge in inflation has been driven by the ongoing Iran conflict, disruptions in oil supply, and record gasoline prices. These factors have pushed consumer prices higher, deepening public frustration over the cost of living.

Consumer sentiment has fallen to record lows, with particularly sharp declines in

economic confidence among Republican voters. The report suggests growing concern within the White House that economic issues are being overshadowed by geopolitical developments.

Officials reportedly worry that focus on the Iran war is diverting attention from affordability concerns, which remain central for voters ahead of critical midterm elections in less than seven months.

Inflation has reached its highest level in four years, reinforcing concerns that price pressures could become a major political liability. Rising fuel costs have had a direct impact on households and are expected to influence broader prices across goods and services.

The broader sentiment downturn highlights how economic perceptions are increasingly tied to global instability, particularly energy market disruptions.

China's surveillance expansion draws global scrutiny

GERMANY

China's growing surveillance infrastructure and expanding security crackdowns are drawing renewed international concern, according to a recent report highlighting increased global scrutiny of its internal governance practices.

The report notes that authorities in China have significantly expanded digital monitoring systems in recent years, integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and big data analytics into public security operations.

Human rights organisations and foreign policy analysts have raised concerns that the expanding surveillance state is being used not only for crime prevention but also for tighter control over political dissent and civil liberties. These concerns have intensified alongside reports of broader crackdowns in sensitive regions and communities.

Critics argue that the scale and sophistication of surveillance in China represents one of the most extensive state monitoring systems in the world. They warn that the growing use of technology in governance could further reduce personal privacy and freedom of expression.

Beijing, however, maintains that its security measures are necessary for maintaining social stability and combating terrorism, separatism, and organised crime. Officials say these systems help improve public safety and administrative efficiency.

TRAVEL SURGE

China sees strong rebound in int travel

NEW DELHI

China has reported a strong rise in international travel in the first quarter of 2026, indicating continued recovery in global mobility and cross-border tourism activity, according to official updates highlighted by Ambassador Xu Feihong.

In a statement, Xu said both inbound and outbound travel recorded notable growth, reflecting improved global connectivity and easing of travel barriers. The increase has been supported by simplified visa procedures, stronger tourism demand, and the gradual normalisation of international movement.

Data for Q1 2026 shows that China recorded about 185 million inbound and outbound trips, marking a year-on-year increase of around 13.5 per

cent. Foreign visitor arrivals also rose sharply, registering growth of over 20 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The rebound signals a broader recovery in global travel flows, with both tourism and business travel contributing to the uptick. Airlines and travel operators have also reported higher demand across major international routes, particularly in Asia and Europe.

Officials attributed the growth to policy measures aimed at facilitating cross-border travel, including streamlined visa rules and expanded travel agreements with partner countries. Improved flight connectivity and rising consumer confidence have further supported the trend.

The China is increasingly focusing on reviving its tourism and services sector, which was significantly impacted in previous years due to global disruptions. The current momentum is seen as a key indicator of economic normalisation.

Analysts say the recovery in international travel also reflects stronger global economic engagement, with mobility expected to continue rising through 2026 if current trends persist.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	3		5	1		8		
1		6	8		3	4		5
8		9	4		2	1	3	7
2	1				8	3	5	
9		8		7			1	4
3	4		9	2		7	6	
	8	1	7	3	6	9		2
7		4	1				8	3
6			2	8	4			1

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

1	4	2	9	7	8	3	5	6
9	6	8	4	3	5	1	2	7
3	7	5	1	2	6	9	8	4
8	2	7	3	6	4	5	9	1
4	9	1	8	5	2	7	6	3
5	3	6	7	1	9	8	4	2
7	5	4	2	9	3	6	1	8
2	1	9	6	8	7	4	3	5
6	8	3	5	4	1	2	7	9

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

QUICK READ

Kesar India focuses sustainable real estate growth

Maharashtra

Kesar India Limited has expanded its long-term development pipeline to over ₹5,100 crore in Gross Development Value across 29 residential and mixed-use projects. It covers about 12.24 million sq. ft. of developable area and provides execution visibility for the next three to five years. The company plans phased investments of over ₹2,000 crore aligned with project milestones and funding requirements. This strategy aims to strengthen long-term growth visibility and improve execution efficiency across its portfolio. Overall, Kesar India Limited positions itself for steady medium-term expansion with a diversified project base, stronger land acquisitions, and improved financial planning supporting sustainable real estate growth in coming years ahead going forward ahead continuously.

Delhi EV Policy 2.0 drives clean mobility shift

New Delhi

Delhi government's draft Electric Vehicle Policy 2.0 (2026–2030) aims to accelerate EV adoption while tackling air pollution through incentives and phased restrictions. It offers 100 percent exemption on road tax and registration fees for EVs until March 31, 2030, with additional concessions for hybrids and limits on luxury EV benefits. The policy proposes bans on new petrol two-wheelers from 2028 and mandates electric three-wheelers from 2027, along with restrictions on fleet operators adding fossil-fuel vehicles. Incentives for buyers of electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, commercial vehicles and cars are structured to decline over three years, with scrappage-linked benefits for replacing older polluting vehicles supporting cleaner transport transition in national capital region going forward.

DIIs offset FII selling; markets rebound strongly

New Delhi

Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) offset heavy foreign institutional investor (FII) selling and supported Indian equities during the week as global sentiment improved after a reported US-Iran ceasefire. FIIs sold Rs 20,710 crore while DIIs bought Rs 21,602 crore, helping benchmark indices rebound more than 5 per cent for the week. Retail investors remained active as SIP inflows reached a record Rs 32,087 crore in March, reflecting strong domestic participation. Analysts said easing geopolitical tensions, lower crude prices and short covering boosted risk appetite across markets. Overall benchmark indices closed higher, with Bank Nifty outperforming and recording strong weekly gains. Foreign flows remain volatile amid global cues and earnings outlook ahead uncertain.

Puri hails HPCL's Rajasthan refinery capabilities

Pointing out its advanced refining and processing capabilities, he said such projects are crucial to ensure energy security and reduce dependence on imports

NEW DELHI

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has praised the refining and processing capabilities of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited's Rajasthan Refinery, highlighting it as a key asset in strengthening India's energy infrastructure.

The minister noted that the refinery represents a major step forward in enhancing domestic refining capacity and supporting the country's growing fuel demand. He emphasised that such projects are crucial for improving energy security and reducing dependence on imports.

The Rajasthan Refinery, being developed as one of the largest integrated refining and petrochemical complexes in the country, is expected to play a significant role in boosting industrial growth in the region. It is designed to produce a wide range of petroleum products and petrochemicals to meet both domestic and industrial requirements.

Officials said the project aligns with India's broader strategy to expand refining capacity while integrating advanced processing technologies. This is expected to improve efficiency, output quality, and environmental performance.

The refinery is also expected to generate significant employment opportunities during both construction and operational phases, contributing to local economic development. Ancillary industries and supply chains are likely to benefit as well.

Minister Puri reiterated the government's commitment to supporting large-scale energy infrastructure projects that enhance self-reliance in the petroleum sector. He added that modern refineries like the Rajasthan facility will help India meet future energy demands while maintaining global competitiveness.

Gold extends rally for 3rd week on dollar weakness

NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed for a third straight week, aided by safe-haven demand, weaker dollar trends, easing inflation concerns, and optimism around geopolitical developments and rate cuts

Gold prices rose 1.65 per cent during the week, marking their third consecutive weekly gain, driven by safe-haven buying and a weaker US dollar. The uptrend was supported by easing inflation concerns and early signs of progress in US-Iran ceasefire negotiations.

futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange of India showed marginal gains, with gold June contracts rising 0.02 per cent and silver May futures edging up 0.01 per cent. Gold futures were trading at Rs 1,52,690, while silver stood at Rs 2,43,300 per kg.

According to data from the India Bullion and Jewellers Association, the price of 10 grams of 24-carat gold increased to Rs 1,50,327 on Friday, compared to Rs 1,47,891 at the start of the week.

In global markets, COMEX gold settled at $4,787.40 per troy ounce, gaining around 3 per cent for the week. Analysts see strong resistance near the $5,000 mark, beyond which a sustained bull run could emerge.

Market participants attributed the dollar's weakness to easing geopolitical tensions and expectations of a more accommodative stance by the Federal Reserve. Falling crude oil prices have further strengthened hopes of lower inflation.

Analysts noted that currency movements, especially in the USD/INR pair, will remain crucial for domestic prices. Recent rupee strength has provided some support, though any reversal could impact future trends.

Technically, MCX gold holds support between Rs 1,48,000 and Rs 1,46,000, with resistance near Rs 1,54,000–1,55,000. Silver is supported between Rs 2,30,000 and Rs 2,25,000, with deeper support at Rs 2,05,000–2,00,000.

The milestone underscores India's rapid transformation into a global leader in digital payments, driven by innovation, scale, and widespread adoption

UPI at 10, powers India's digital payment dominance

NEW DELHI

As Unified Payments Interface completes a decade, India now accounts for 49 per cent of global real-time digital payment transactions, highlighting its fintech leadership.

The milestone underscores India's rapid transformation into a global leader in digital payments, driven by innovation, scale, and widespread adoption across urban and rural segments alike. The government noted that UPI processed 21.70 billion transactions in January 2026 alone, amounting to Rs 28.33 lakh crore in value. Overall, it now contributes 81 per cent of India's retail digital payments.

According to the International Monetary Fund, UPI is the world's largest real-time payment system by volume, built in less than a decade. Since its launch, the platform has grown 12,000-fold in transaction volume and over 4,000 times in value.

Beyond scale, UPI has transformed financial inclusion. From street vendors and autorickshaw drivers to small traders in village mandis, it has enabled instant, low-cost transactions using basic smartphones. This has helped bridge gaps between urban and rural users, as well as formal and informal sectors.

India's digital payments model is now being recognised globally, with institutions like the IMF and the World Bank praising its efficiency and inclusiveness. UPI has also expanded internationally to countries including the UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, and France, facilitating seamless cross-border payments.

The platform continues to evolve with features like UPI Lite for small transactions and AutoPay for recurring payments. Additionally, credit integration through fintech firms and NBFCs is expanding access to loans and customised financial services.

FACT-FILE

- 49% share of global real-time payments
- 21.70 billion transactions in January 2026
- Rs 28.33 lakh crore transaction value
- 81% of India's retail digital payments
- Operates in multiple countries globally

Stocks slip as oil eases ahead US talks

NEW YORK

Stocks on Wall Street drifted mostly lower while oil prices eased as investors awaited planned U.S.-Iran talks aimed at stabilising tensions following a fragile ceasefire.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.1% amid choppy trading, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.6%. The Nasdaq Composite rose 0.4%, supported by gains in major technology stocks. Despite the mixed session, all three indexes posted weekly gains for a second straight week.

Oil markets remained highly sensitive to geopolitical developments. Brent crude, the global benchmark, fell 0.8% to $95.20 per barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate dropped 1.3% to $96.57. Prices have swung sharply since the conflict began, at one point surging above $119 per barrel from around $70 earlier.

The market focus is now on weekend diplomatic talks between U.S. and Iranian officials in Pakistan, though uncertainty remains over whether negotiations will proceed smoothly. Earlier disruptions in shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have already contributed to supply concerns and price volatility.

Rising energy costs have begun feeding into broader inflation trends, with recent data showing a sharp increase in consumer prices. Economists warn that persistent oil shocks could prolong inflationary pressure in the coming months.

Investors are also closely watching the Federal Reserve, which is expected to maintain a cautious stance on interest rates amid concerns that inflation remains above its 2 per cent target. Higher yields and weaker consumer sentiment have added to market caution, even as technology stocks continue to provide some support.

South Korea to roll out cash aid soon

SEOUL

South Korea will begin distributing cash assistance later this month to support households facing rising living costs triggered by the Middle East crisis.

The government said the aid will target the bottom 70% of income earners, with a phased rollout starting April 27 for the most vulnerable and expanding to others from May 18.

Around 32.5 million people are expected to benefit, receiving between 1,00,000 won ($67.30) and 6,00,000 won depending on income levels and regional factors. The payments are part of a broader relief package aimed at cushioning the economic impact of elevated oil prices and global uncertainty.

The National Assembly of South Korea recently approved a supplementary budget of 26.2 trillion won to address the fallout from ongoing geopolitical tensions. The Cabinet subsequently cleared the plan, with Prime Minister Kim Min-seok emphasising swift and efficient implementation.

Of the total package, 6.1 trillion won has been allocated specifically for the cash assistance programme. Beneficiaries will receive funds via debit cards, prepaid cards or regional gift vouchers, which must be used by August 31, after which unused balances will revert to the state.

Meanwhile, supply concerns persist as disruptions continue in the Strait of Hormuz despite a ceasefire between the United States and Iran. National Security Adviser Wi Sung-lac said shipping traffic remains constrained, raising concerns over energy imports.

The government is working to secure alternative supply routes for crude oil and petrochemicals, warning that uncertainty in global supply chains may continue in the near term.

Petroleum Ministry corrects PNG gasification figures

NEW DELHI

The Petroleum Ministry clarified that a recent briefing incorrectly stated LPG connection growth, confirming that the reported figure actually refers to Piped Natural Gas connections, not LPG. The ministry said the error was inadvertent and regretted.

Officials stated that 4.05 lakh PNG connections have been gasified over the past five weeks, while an additional 4.41 lakh consumers have registered for new connections. The correction comes amid ongoing efforts to expand cleaner household energy access across urban areas.

The ministry also assured that domestic LPG supply remains stable, with no reports of shortages or disruptions at distributor levels despite geopolitical tensions affecting global energy markets. Authorities emphasised that supply chains are being closely monitored to ensure uninterrupted availability.

Consumers have been encouraged to consider alternative clean energy options such as PNG and electric cooktops as part of broader energy transition efforts. The government also urged citizens to avoid panic buying of petrol, diesel, and LPG, stressing reliance on official updates only.

Digital adoption in fuel distribution has increased significantly, with nearly 98 per cent of LPG bookings now done online. Delivery Authentication Code-based deliveries have also risen to about 92 per cent, helping reduce diversion and improve transparency.

AI-driven shifts force IT firms to rethink workforce

BENGALURU

AI-infused operating models are rapidly transforming workforce strategies across IT services firms, as companies respond to mounting pricing pressures and the need to protect margins.

Analysts note that intensified global competition has pushed firms into a hyper-cost-conscious mode, where efficiency, automation, and productivity gains are no longer optional but essential for survival.

A key change is the increasing substitution of routine, repetitive tasks with AI-powered tools, reducing dependence on large entry-level hiring. This is leading to a more pyramid-light workforce structure, where fewer junior employees are needed while demand rises for highly skilled professionals who can design, manage, and work alongside AI systems. As a result, hiring strategies are becoming more selective and skill-focused.

Reskilling and upskilling have emerged as top priorities. Companies are investing in training programs to redeploy existing employees into roles that require advanced digital, data, and AI-related capabilities. This shift aims to balance cost optimization with talent retention, as replacing workers entirely can be more expensive and disruptive.

Additionally, project execution models are evolving. AI enables faster delivery cycles and leaner teams, allowing firms to handle more work with fewer people. While this improves profitability, it also raises concerns about job displacement and long-term employment growth in the sector.

Overall, AI is not just a technological upgrade but a structural disruptor. It is compelling IT firms to redesign workforce composition, redefine roles, and rethink how value is delivered, all while navigating the delicate balance between efficiency and human capital sustainability.

BOOMING AMID CRISIS

India retains fastest growing major economy tag despite global slowdown

NEW DELHI

India is expected to remain one of the fastest-growing major economies globally despite a broader slowdown, with growth projected at around 6.6% in FY27, according to a new World Bank update.

The report noted that rising energy prices driven by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and ongoing supply chain disruptions are weighing on global economic activity. However, India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals are expected to provide resilience against external shocks.

Key buffers include substantial foreign exchange reserves, low inflation, a healthy financial sector, and predominantly rupee-denominated public debt. These factors help shield the economy from global volatility and support sustained growth momentum.

The World Bank said India's growth outlook also depends on boosting private sector-led expansion and improving the business environment to unlock investment and job creation across sectors such as energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.

The report further highlighted that South Asia is projected to grow at 6.3 per cent in 2026, slightly lower than 7 per cent in 2025, before recovering to 6.9 per cent in 2027. Despite the moderation, the region continues to outperform most other emerging markets.

It also warned that prolonged global conflict could significantly impact inflation and growth worldwide, with inflation potentially rising by up to 300 basis points in adverse scenarios. Industrial policy use has also increased across the region, though outcomes have been mixed.

SOORYAVANSHI & JUREL
Shine As Rajasthan Topples B'lore

Rajasthan Royals handed Bengaluru their first loss as teen star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Dhruv Jurel powered a clinical victory.

JAIPUR

In a thrilling display of youth and composure, Rajasthan Royals (RR) ended Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) unbeaten streak with a commanding six-wicket victory. The win was fueled by a record-breaking performance from young sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and a clinical finish by Dhruv Jurel, marking a major turning point in the IPL 2026 season.

Chasing a competitive target set by RCB, the Royals found an unlikely hero in the thirteen-year-old Sooryavanshi. The prodigy played with a maturity far beyond his years, dismantling the Bangalore bowling attack with a fearless array of shots. His aggressive start put the opposition on the back foot early, turning what could have been a tense chase into a demonstration of raw talent.

As the match reached its closing stages, Dhruv Jurel took the reins. Known for his calm demeanor under pressure, Jurel guided the team home with a series of calculated boundaries. His ability to find gaps in the field ensured that the run rate remained manageable, eventually sealing the win with over an over to spare.

For RCB, this match served as a wake-up call after an flawless start to their campaign. Despite a solid effort from their top-order batters, their bowlers struggled to contain the momentum generated by Rajasthan's youthful lineup.

KARTHIK
praises fighting spirit despite tough loss

GUWAHATI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Dinesh Karthik is staying positive after his team's first defeat of the season. Despite losing by six wickets to the Rajasthan Royals at Barsapara Stadium, Karthik emphasized that showing "character" during a long tournament like the IPL is more important than a single result.

Dinesh Karthik praised RCB's resilience after their first defeat, highlighting Rajat Patidar's leadership and Venkatesh Iyer's cameo despite a tough loss to Rajasthan Royals.

Karthik admitted the pitch was tricky and "sticky," making batting difficult. However, he was thrilled with how his squad fought through the challenges. He specifically highlighted captain Rajat Patidar, who played a brilliant knock of 63 runs. Karthik noted that Patidar's ability to read the game and stay nearly until the end was a "special" display of leadership and skill under pressure.

The coach also gave a shout-out to Venkatesh Iyer. Iyer wasn't originally supposed to play but was called up at the last minute. He stepped in fearlessly, smashing 29 runs off just 15 balls. Karthik called it a "wonderful effort" and a great sign for the rest of the season.

On the defensive side, the coach praised the early wicket of Yashasvi Jaiswal but acknowledged that Rajasthan's young stars simply took the game away. Even after giving up nearly 100 runs in the first six overs, RCB dragged the fight deep into the match. Moving forward, the team remains upbeat as they prepare for their next big challenge against the Mumbai Indians this Sunday. Karthik believes this resilient attitude will carry them far in the marathon season ahead.

IPL GIANTS CLASH IN HIGH-STAKES RIVALRY WEEK

NEW DELHI

The 2026 IPL season is heating up as teams find their rhythm after a fortnight of intense cricket. While squads like Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals have displayed early consistency, the upcoming "Rivalry Week" is set to push the tournament into high gear with a series of blockbuster matches.

The fireworks begin with a massive showdown between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. This isn't just a team battle, it is a legendary face-off between icons Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Fans are also eager to see how batters handle the lethal pace of Jasprit Bumrah in what promises to be a tactical masterclass. Midweek, the focus shifts to Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. Both former champions are currently searching for form, making this encounter a desperate fight for momentum. The pressure will be immense as these two historic rivals attempt to climb back up the points table.

Mumbai Indians return later in the week to challenge Punjab Kings, a fixture famous for its unpredictable finishes and heart-stopping Super Overs. Meanwhile, a southern derby between Chennai and Sunrisers Hyderabad will test CSK's discipline against SRH's aggressive batting lineup.

New captain leads Hurricanes against Red force

SAINT JOHN'S

The West Indies Championship kicks off at the Coolidge Cricket Ground with a high-stakes battle between the Leeward Islands Hurricanes and Trinidad and Tobago Red Force.

This opening match starts a vital three-game series that promises to set the tone for the entire 2026 regional season. The Hurricanes are entering a new era under the leadership of all-rounder Justin Greaves. Stepping into the captaincy for the first time, Greaves described the appointment as a proud milestone.

He emphasized that discipline and steady improvement are the keys to success, relying on a mix of veteran guidance and fresh energy.

The squad looks bolstered by young talents like Jewel Andrew and Karima Gore, both of whom showed impressive form during recent warm-up fixtures.

On the other side, the Red Force brings a formidable lineup packed with international experience.

Captain Joshua Da Silva is wary of the short series format, noting that there is zero room for early mistakes.

A major talking point for the visitors is the return of explosive opener Evin Lewis to first-class cricket after a long absence, significantly strengthening their batting order.

History suggests a high-scoring affair, last year's encounter saw over 1,100 runs in a thrilling draw. With both sides desperate for an early advantage, this clash is expected to be a tactical tug-of-war. Fans are eager to see if the Hurricanes' new leadership can withstand the seasoned power of the Red Force in what looks to be a classic Caribbean showdown.

Small town academy becomes cricket star factory

NEW DELHI

A quiet cricket academy in Rajasthan is suddenly the talk of the nation thanks to a new speed king. Ashok Sharma, a 23-year-old pacer for the Gujarat Titans, recently shocked the IPL by clocking the season's fastest delivery at a blistering 154.2 kmph. His rise has turned the spotlight on the Aravali Cricket Club, a grassroots training center proving that elite talent can come from anywhere.

Located in Hathoj, the club has become a breeding ground for professional athletes. Sharma, who consistently bowls above 145 kmph, credits the academy's supportive environment and constant net practice for his sharp control. He isn't the only success story, the club's legacy began with Akash Singh, who now plays for the Lucknow Super Giants. Singh's journey from a small-town lot to the big leagues blazed a trail for his fellow trainees to follow.

This season, the academy's influence is everywhere. Kartik Sharma has joined the legendary Chennai Super Kings, and Mukul Choudhary recently grabbed headlines with a lightning-fast unbeaten half-century. The academy was founded by the late Vivek Yadav, whose vision for local talent continues to thrive through these young players. What was once a humble training spot is now a symbol of hope for aspiring cricketers across India. By focusing on teamwork and dedication, Aravali Cricket Club is successfully shaping the future of the sport. As Ashok Sharma continues to terrorize batters with his raw pace, his home club stands proud as the foundation of his incredible journey.

Hardik honors Rohit for 15 years at MI

NEW DELHI

In an emotional dressing room moment, Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya paid a heartfelt tribute to former skipper Rohit Sharma, celebrating his landmark 15th anniversary with the franchise. Pandya thanked the veteran opener for "leading the way" and serving as a constant source of inspiration for generations of cricketers within the team.

Rohit's journey with the Mumbai Indians began on April 10, 2011, after a transfer from Deccan Chargers that was famously encouraged by legend Sachin Tendulkar. Since that debut, Rohit has become the heart of the franchise, most notably guiding them to an incredible five IPL titles between 2013 and 2020. His leadership transformed the team into a global cricketing powerhouse. "Thank you for inspiring so many people," Pandya said during a video shared by the team. He noted that many current stars, including himself and Jasprit Bumrah, made their professional debuts under Rohit's mentorship. Pandya praised not just Rohit's tactical brilliance on the field, but also his "friendly and open" nature as a human being.

Reflecting on his long tenure, Rohit expressed his own gratitude toward the management, coaching staff, and teammates. He emphasized that the team's massive success was never about individual brilliance but was the result of a collective effort and a supportive environment.

Pandya honours Rohit's 15-year Mumbai legacy

Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya praised Rohit Sharma on his 15-year journey with the franchise. Rohit, who joined in 2011, led the team to five IPL titles and inspired players like Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah, leaving a lasting legacy through leadership, consistency, and mentorship within the squad.

Madhya Pradesh secures double spot in finals

RAJGIR

The stage is set for a thrilling conclusion at the 16th Hockey India Sub Junior National Championship in Bihar. After a series of intense semi-finals, Hockey Madhya Pradesh has emerged as the dominant force, securing a spot in both the men's and women's gold medal matches.

In the men's division, Madhya Pradesh will face off against a powerhouse Uttar Pradesh team. Both sides enter the final undefeated. Madhya Pradesh earned their place by defeating Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu 4-2, while Uttar Pradesh made a massive statement by dethroning last year's champions, Punjab, with a 6-2 victory. Uttar Pradesh boasts the tournament's most lethal attackers, including top scorer Shahrukh Ali, who has netted 14 goals. On the women's side, the final features a clash between the two highest-scoring teams in the competition. Defending champions Hockey Jharkhand will defend their title against a surging Madhya Pradesh squad. Jharkhand reached the final after a steady 2-0 win over Uttar Pradesh, while Madhya Pradesh narrowly beat Odisha 2-1. Fans are eager to see a battle between the top goal-scorers, with Madhya Pradesh's Nousheen Naz leading the pack with nine goals. As the tournament concludes at Rajgir Hockey Stadium, the third-place matches will also provide plenty of excitement. While individual stars have shone, the coaches emphasize that team discipline will decide the champions.

PUNJAB KINGS HONOR BOAT TRAGEDY VICTIMS

NEW CHANDIGARH

The cricket field met a somber moment as the Punjab Kings took a stand for a community in mourning. During their high-stakes clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad, every Punjab player wore a black armband to honor those lost in the recent, tragic boat accident in Vrindavan.

The team shared their grief, posting a heartfelt message on social media. They expressed deep sadness over the accident and offered sincere prayers for the families facing this sudden loss. This gesture transformed the game into more than just a sport, turning the stadium into a space of shared human solidarity. Once the action began, however, the atmosphere shifted to pure adrenaline. Hyderabad's openers, Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head, launched a fierce attack. Abhishek was nearly unstoppable, smashing 74 runs off a mere 28 balls. Their explosive partnership pushed Hyderabad past 100 runs in record time, leaving the Punjab bowlers searching for answers under the hot Chandigarh sun.

The momentum finally swung when Punjab's Shashank Singh stepped up. In a brilliant display of composure, he dismissed both set openers in a single over, briefly silencing the traveling Hyderabad fans. Despite the double blow, the Sunrisers remained in a powerful position, reaching 132 runs at the halfway mark.

While the competition on the pitch remained fierce, the black armbands serve as a quiet, steady reminder of the world beyond the boundary ropes and the lives remembered.

Ayush Shetty stuns world No. 1 in China

NINGBO

Ayush Shetty stunned World No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn to reach the Badminton Asia Championships final, marking a historic breakthrough and a landmark moment for Indian sports.

Indian badminton has a new hero as Ayush Shetty pulled off a massive upset to reach the final of the Badminton Asia Championships. In a match that left fans breathless, Shetty defeated the current World No. 1 and Olympic silver medalist, Kunlavut Vitidsarn, in a historic men's singles semifinal.

The young Indian star walked onto the court at the Ningbo Olympic Sports Centre as the underdog against the top-seeded Thai champion. Vitidsarn is famous across the globe for his "brick wall" defense and clever tactical play, but he struggled to find answers for Shetty's high-energy performance.

From the first serve, Shetty played with a "nothing to lose" attitude, using aggressive smashes and lightning-fast movement to keep the world's best player under constant pressure.

While many experts expected a routine victory for the experienced Vitidsarn, Shetty proved that rankings do not decide matches. His composure in the closing moments showed a maturity far beyond his years, allowing him to clinch a spot in the gold-medal match. This victory is being hailed as a landmark moment for Indian sports, proving the country's growing depth in international badminton.

As he prepares for the final, Shetty carries the immense confidence of knowing he can beat any player on the planet. Whether he takes home the gold or not, his fearless run in China has already signaled the arrival of a major new talent on the global stage. Indian fans now eagerly await the championship showdown.

Sainyam scores historic world cup final finish

NEW DELHI

Indian shooting star Sainyam reached a new career milestone this weekend, securing her best-ever finish at an ISSF World Cup. Competing in the women's 10m air pistol event in Granada, Spain, the former junior world and Asian champion fought her way to a highly creditable fifth place in a field of the world's elite athletes. Sainyam showed remarkable poise throughout the high-pressure final, eventually finishing with a total score of 178.9. While she narrowly missed out on a podium spot, the result marks a significant step forward in her transition from a dominant junior player to a top-tier senior contender. Her performance in Spain proves she can hold her own against the very best on the global stage.

She wasn't the only Indian making waves in Granada. Reigning Asian Games champion Palak also displayed her trademark skill by qualifying for the final round. Palak ultimately finished in seventh place, bowing out after the 14th shot.

Blue Tigresses start new chapter in Kenya

NAIROBI

Just a month after a heartbreaking Asian Cup exit, the Indian women's football team is ready to lace up their boots again. The Blue Tigresses face hosts Kenya at the Nyayo National Stadium, marking the start of the FIFA Series 2026. This historic match is the first time the senior women's team has ever competed on African soil.

Head coach Crispin Chettri is using this tournament to look toward the future. With an eye on the 2031 World Cup qualifiers, Chettri has brought a youthful squad with an average age of just 22.8 years. "The idea is to start building now," Chettri explained, noting that the team wants to expand its pool of competitive players.

Several veteran stars, including forward Grace Dangmei and goalkeeper Panthoi Chanu, are absent due to injuries or rest. This opens the door for rising talents like Jasoda Munda and Malavika P to prove they belong on the big stage. Chettri also encouraged star attacker Manisha to remain with her club in Peru to focus on her professional development. The challenge will be a physical one. While Kenya is ranked lower than India, their players are known for their speed and strength. Chettri views this as a vital test ahead of the SAFF Women's Championship in Goa next month. A win today could set up a dream final against powerhouse Australia, giving India's "Young Tigresses" the perfect platform to grow.

YOUNG TIGRESSES FACE RUSSIA IN KEY TESTS

The Indian U17 women's team is preparing for important friendly matches against Russia in Sochi as part of their build-up to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026. Coach Pamela Conti has praised the players for their attitude, saying the camp has helped them improve technically, tactically and physically. India recently recorded wins over Myanmar in friendly matches and will now use these games to prepare for a tough Group C featuring Australia Japan and Lebanon. Head coach said Russia's physical style will help India get ready for stronger teams while focus remains on discipline structure and learning as the squad aims to grow ahead of next month's Asian Cup in China with confidence and better understanding of modern football demands therefore.

Pope and Smith smash centuries for Surrey

LONDON

England stars Ollie Pope and Jamie Smith have sent a defiant message to national selectors by smashing brilliant centuries for Surrey. The pair dominated the Leicestershire bowling attack, proving their hunger to reclaim their Test spots after a challenging winter away during the Ashes.

Ollie Pope, England's regular number three, anchored the innings with a gritty 103. Despite losing his place in the final Tests in Australia to newcomer Jacob Bethell, Pope showed great character on the domestic stage. "Runs are the currency," Pope remarked, admitting he had to dig deep to find his rhythm and get back to his best form.

His teammate Jamie Smith was equally impressive, piling on a commanding 166. This follows his century in the opening round, marking a spectacular start to the season for the wicket-keeper-batter. Together, the duo shared a massive 200-run partnership, effectively silencing critics who questioned their form following the Ashes series.

The day also saw success for young spinner Shoaib Bashir, who took career-best figures of 4-76 for Derbyshire. Bashir emphasized the importance of bowling long spells to mature as a cricketer. As England prepares for upcoming home series against New Zealand and Pakistan starting in June, these powerhouse performances in the County Championship couldn't have come at a better time. For Pope and Smith, these hundreds are more than just statistics—they are a loud knock on the door of the national team.

Awareness essential for women's bill success

RAIPUR

Former Indian badminton champion Kavita Dixit has called the Women's Reservation Bill a "great effort" to erase long-standing gender bias. Speaking in Raipur, Dixit argued that while the 33% reservation policy is a vital start, its success depends on women actively claiming their political power. "Society only progresses when women step forward to use these new rights," she noted.

The government is currently moving ahead with the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, which introduces major changes to how India is governed. To make this representation work. This move is backed by the Delimitation Commission Bill, which aims to break down old societal barriers. By using data from the 2011 Census to redraw political boundaries, the government hopes to ensure that women are no longer just spectators but are central to the country's decision-making process. Dixit's message remains clear, the law provides the door, but women across the country must be the ones to walk through it.

THE FOLLOWING STRUCTURAL SHIFTS ARE PLANNED:

- **Seat Expansion:** The number of Lok Sabha seats is set to grow from 543 to 816.
- **Reserved Quota:** Out of these new seats, 273 will be set aside specifically for female candidates.
- **Future Timeline:** The Union Cabinet has approved these steps with the goal of having everything ready for the 2029 national elections.

Ahmedabad shines as 2030 Commonwealth Games venue

NEW DELHI

India is officially on track to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, with Ahmedabad emerging as the central hub for the event's centenary edition. Following a high-level inspection, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha confirmed that international delegates were "very happy" with the city's rapid progress and infrastructure.

The delegation from Commonwealth Sport, including President Donald Rukare and CEO Katie Sadleir, completed a three-day tour of Gujarat, visiting venues in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Vadodara, and Ekta Nagar. According to Usha, the team was particularly impressed by the "one-track" alignment between the central government, the Gujarat state leadership, and sports bodies like the SAI and IOA.

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya presented a futuristic vision for the Games

With Ahmedabad's strong connectivity and the government's focus on grassroots legacy planning, the 2030 Games are being positioned as a landmark moment for Indian sports. "They were very happy and hope that it will be a very good centenary games," Usha noted, signaling a confident start to India's hosting journey.

focusing on three core pillars:

- **Athlete-Centric:** Prioritizing world-class competition and welfare.
- **Sustainable:** Ensuring a long-term environmental and social impact.
- **Tech-Enabled:** Utilizing modern systems for efficient delivery.

INDIA SWEEPS 13 GOLDS AT YOUTH TABLE TENNIS

SHIMLA

India's young table tennis stars once again proved they are the powerhouse of the region, capturing a staggering 13 gold medals at the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships. The dominant performance has solidified India's position as the undisputed leader in South Asian table tennis. The championship, held in the scenic city of Shimla, carried high stakes as it also served as a critical qualifying event for the upcoming Asian Youth Championships. This added pressure didn't seem to faze the Indian squad, who consistently outperformed rivals from neighboring nations to sweep nearly every major category.

The highlight of the final day was the Under-19 boys' singles final, which turned into an all-Indian showdown. In a display of high-speed reflexes and tactical skill, Priyanuj Bhattacharyya faced off against his teammate Punit Biswas. Bhattacharyya ultimately secured the gold medal with a hard-fought 3-1 victory, showcasing the incredible depth of talent currently rising through India's national ranks. By securing 13 top-podium finishes, the Indian paddlers have sent a clear message to the rest of the continent ahead of the Asian-level qualifiers. The tournament concluded with India as the top-performing nation, leaving no doubt about their regional supremacy. As these young athletes prepare for the next stage of international competition, their clinical performance in Shimla serves as a perfect launchpad for the challenges ahead in the continental circuit.

Aditi: World's first film shot in five takes

BENGALURU

A new female-focused psychological thriller titled Aditi has been announced, with makers claiming it is the first film in the world shot in just five long shots. The film is produced by Valarina Maria Rogers and Nelson Rogers W under Millennium Ad Media.

The project carries the tagline "Liberty" and is written by Nelson Rogers W, who has also handled the story, screenplay, and action design. The film is co-directed by Solomon K. George, who is also involved in editing.

The makers recently launched promotional activities including songs, teaser release, and the unveiling of the Y2K Mizik Audio Company logo at a city event. The programme was inaugurated by actor Chetan Kumar.

The film features Yieshaana Sannappanavar in the lead role, along with Harshitha Kallingal, Aarthi, Nisarga Manjunath, Yesha, Danny Kuttappa, Sunil, Ajith Kumar, and Gopi in supporting roles.

Director Solomon K. George said the film includes psychological thriller elements and keeps viewers engaged with questions about the identity and mystery surrounding the central character. Each of the five shots reportedly runs for 20 to 25 minutes, requiring extensive preparation and actor training.

Veteran cinematographer P. K. H. Das has worked on capturing the long takes, while music is composed by Ramesh Krishna and Krishna Priyadarshan. The film has been shot in Bengaluru and Kanakapura.

Aditi will release in multiple languages including Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, and Konkani, with women writers contributing dialogues across versions. The film is expected to complete censor formalities soon and release in June.

Industry titans unite against movie piracy crimes

The leak of Vijay's highly anticipated film, Jananayagan, has sent shockwaves through the industry, leading legends Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan to demand immediate action. Both stars expressed deep pain over the digital theft, calling it a direct attack on the hard work of thousands of artists and technicians.

Rajinikanth urged the government to find those responsible and hand out severe punishments to stop such crimes from happening again. He emphasized that film associations must speak up loudly against these illegal uploads. Meanwhile, Kamal Haasan blamed the leak on a "systemic failure," suggesting that long delays in getting films certified often push people toward illegal channels. He reminded fans that piracy hurts everyone, from the rich producers to the local theater owners who pay their taxes.

"Who protects the creator when the system fails?" Haasan asked, calling for faster certification and real-time takedowns of pirated content. He urged true cinema lovers to support the film by watching it legally in theaters. This incident has reignited a fierce debate over censorship delays and the need for stronger laws to protect creative property.

Despite this dark cloud over the industry, fans are finding hope in another major announcement. Rajinikanth and Haasan are set to reunite on the big screen after decades in a new project directed by Nelson Dilipkumar. While the industry fights to end piracy, the excitement for this legendary duo proves that the spirit of cinema remains stronger than any digital crime.

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA SLAMS FILM LEAK SYSTEM FAILURE

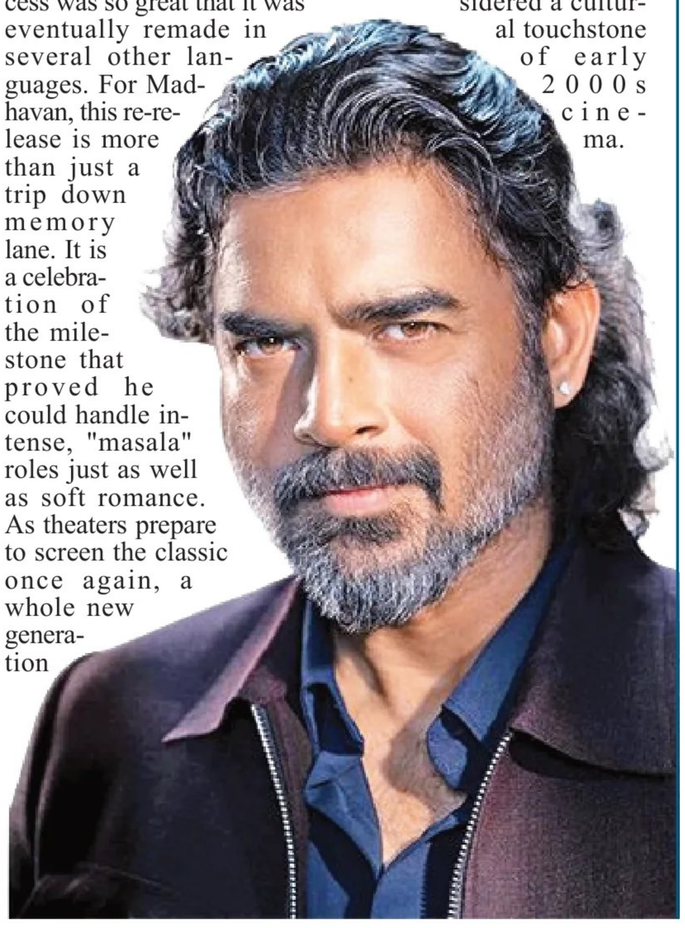
Vijay Deverakonda has reacted strongly to the leak of Thalapathy Vijay's film Jana Nayagan. He said the incident shows a serious system failure in protecting films. Posting on social media, he shared anger and concern based on personal experience. He said piracy hurts not only money but also emotions of entire teams. He added that films are made by actors directors producers and technicians together. He demanded quick action against those responsible for leaking the movie online. The film has faced delays earlier due to censor board issues. Fans and industry members have supported his message and called for stronger protection. He also reminded that piracy damages hard work and dreams of many people. Deverakonda urged authorities and digital platforms to act fast saying the industry needs stronger laws and better monitoring to stop leaks and protect future films and the people who work on them in the industry today.

MADHAVAN'S CAREER-CHANGING HIT 'RUN' RETURNS TO THEATERS

Actor R. Madhavan is heading back to his roots as his 2002 blockbuster, Run, prepares for a grand re-release on April 24. Taking to social media, the star shared nostalgic posters and officially called the film the "game changer" that redefined his journey in Indian cinema.

Before Run, Madhavan was primarily known as the charming "boy next door" from romantic dramas. However, this high-octane film by director N. Lingusamy transformed him into a versatile action hero. The story of a young man caught in a dangerous chase for love struck a chord with the youth, particularly through iconic moments like the famous "shutter fight" sequence.

The film wasn't just a solo effort, it featured a massive ensemble, including Meera Jasmine in her Tamil debut, the legendary Raghuvaran, and comedian Vivek. The music by Vidyasagar also became a massive hit, helping the film become one of the highest-grossing Tamil movies of its year. Its success was so great that it was eventually remade in several other languages. For Madhavan, this re-release is more than just a trip down memory lane. It is a celebration of the milestone that proved he could handle intense, "masala" roles just as well as soft romance. As theaters prepare to screen the classic once again, a whole new generation of fans will get to experience why this film is considered a cultural touchstone of early 2000s cinema.



Wedding night turns deadly in chilling new thriller

What should have been the happiest night of their lives becomes a brutal fight for survival in the first trailer for An Enemy Within. The dark action thriller, released by Saban Films, is set to hit theaters on May 15, 2026, and is already sparking buzz for its terrifying "ticking clock" premise.

The story follows Caleb Wingate, played by William Moseley, during his wedding reception at a grand Victorian hotel. The celebration takes a horrifying turn when Caleb receives a phone call from a mysterious sniper named "The Wolf." The ultimatum is simple but deadly, Caleb must kill his own father-in-law before the clock strikes midnight, or his new bride, Julia, will be executed.

As Caleb desperately tries to save his wife, the film uncovers dark secrets hidden within the powerful family he just married into. Behind the glamorous wedding lies a history of corporate corruption and past crimes. While the unsuspecting guests continue to party, Caleb must

navigate a maze of betrayal and armed guards, forced to decide how much blood he is willing to spill for love.

This marks the debut of writer and director John Michael Kennedy, who leads a strong cast including Kim Spearman and Patrick Baladi. The film blends psychological mind games with fast-paced action, asking the haunting question, can you ever truly trust the people you call family? For Caleb, the honeymoon is over before it even began, replaced by a race against time that will leave audiences on the edge of their seats.

Star Akanksha Puri praises Bollywood's great career reinventions

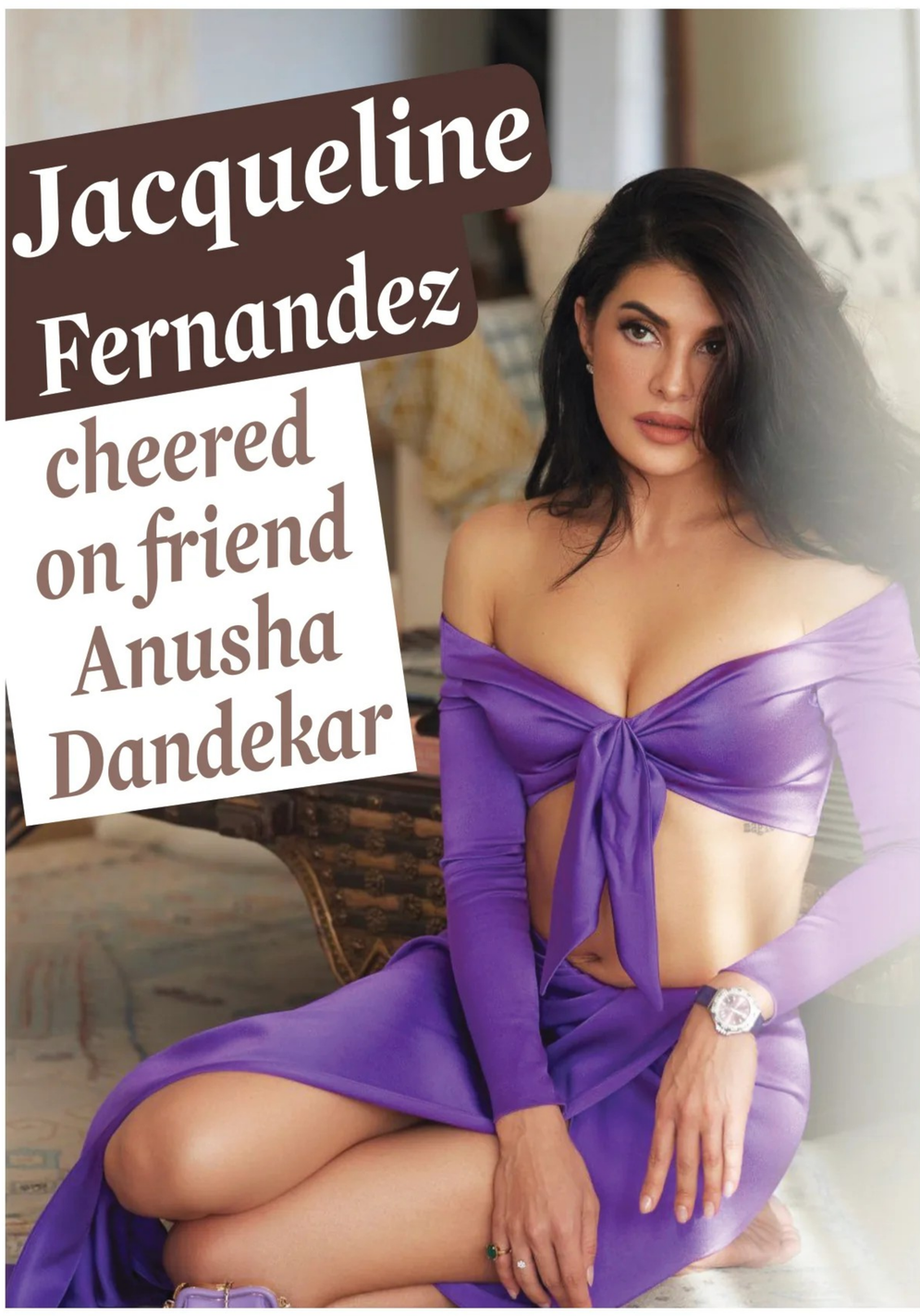
Popular actress Akanksha Puri is opening up about what it takes to survive in the fast-paced world of show business. While promoting her new music video, Saadi Farmaish, the star shared that the secret to a long career is the ability to change and stay modern.

Puri pointed to actors Akshaye Khanna and Bobby Deol as perfect examples of success. She noted that both stars are currently delivering the best work of their lives. According to Puri, these actors are at their absolute peak because they were willing to reinvent themselves rather than sticking to the old ways of doing things.

"You have to update yourself," Puri explained during her Mumbai press event. She warned that many people she started with have disappeared from the spotlight because they refused to adapt. Whether it is fashion, hairstyles, or professional mindsets, she believes staying ready for any opportunity is the only way to win. She stressed that if a performer isn't prepared when a call comes, the role will quickly go to someone else.

Currently, Puri is enjoying her own success with her latest song alongside Ashmit Patel. The track is winning hearts for its soulful, contemporary feel. However, her message to her peers remains clear that is to stay relevant, one must embrace the future with an open mind. By looking at the "second innings" of stars like Deol and Khanna, she proves that in Bollywood, your best days can always be ahead of you.

Jacqueline Fernandez cheered on friend Anusha Dandekar



Bollywood star Jacqueline Fernandez turned heads in Mumbai last night as she stepped out to support her close friend, Anusha Dandekar. The actress attended a special performance of the new stage play, Lovable Rascal, joining a star-studded crowd that included Farhan Akhtar and Shibani Dandekar Akhtar.

The play, directed by the well-known Mahesh Manjrekar, is a dark suspense thriller. It tells the story of Amruta, a widow whose quiet life is shattered by a mysterious and dangerous presence. As the plot unfolds, the audience is pulled into a world of secrets and psychological mind games. Anusha Dandekar has been winning high praise from critics and fans alike for her intense and emotional performance in the lead role.

Jacqueline was seen arriving at the venue on April 10, 2026, where she stopped to chat with the media and greet other guests. Her presence added a touch of glamour to the evening, but the focus remained on the art. She was quick to cheer for the cast, noting how wonderful it was to see her friends shine on the live stage.

Thanks to strong celebrity support and glowing reviews, Lovable Rascal is quickly becoming the must-see production in the city. As word-of-mouth spreads about the play's gripping twists, theaters across Mumbai are seeing a surge in crowds. For Jacqueline and her circle, the night was a perfect blend of high-stakes drama and a warm reunion of industry friends.

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